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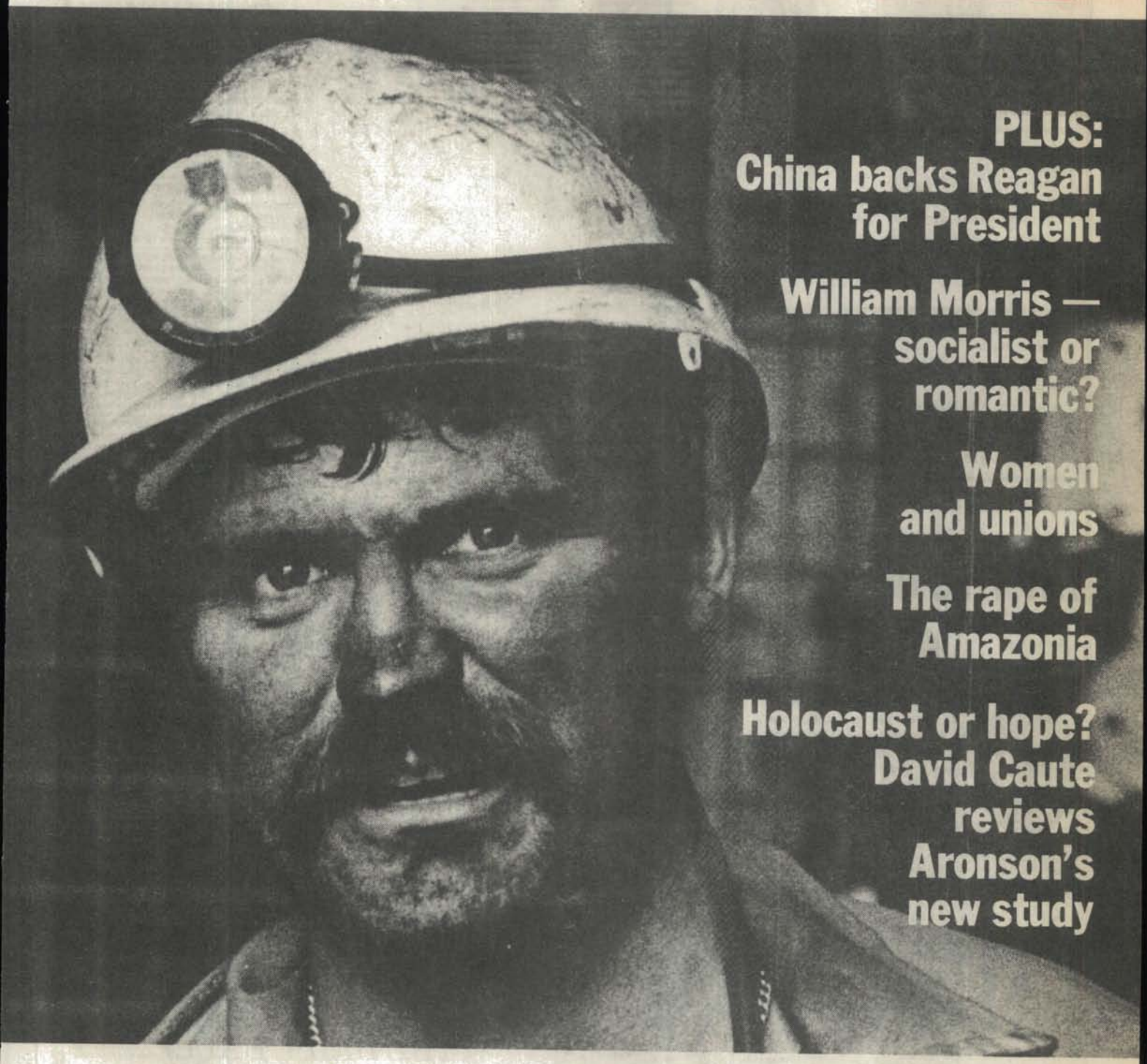
# New Statesman



PLUS:
China backs Reagan for President

William Morris — socialist or romantic?

Women and unions

The rape of Amazonia

Holocaust or hope? David Caute reviews Aronson's new study

# MINERS' WAR

## Scargill's last stand?

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**New Statesman**

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New Statesman Vol 107 No 2766 23 March 1984

# Shadow boxing for Britain

WHEN THE LAST European summit ended in acrimonious failure in Athens last December we suggested that it would take six months and another two summits to reach a compromise that all parties could accept. Despite the mainly genuine exasperation expressed this week by Mrs Thatcher's counterparts about her negotiating style and tactics, that still seems to be the most likely outcome of the current budget crisis. Cynics have noted that President Mitterrand has arranged things so that there will be two European summits instead of the usual one, during his six months in the EEC chair.

The essential issues to be settled remain unaltered. The first is agreement on how to limit net contributions to the Brussels budget. The second is reform of the way in which Brussels raises and spends money on behalf of the Community. Crudely put, Britain wants a permanent mechanism governing net payments that is as favourable to us as possible; and it also needs substantial reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. Its formal negotiating position has long been that it will only agree to increasing the revenues of the Community, which is otherwise set to go bankrupt in the course of this year, as part of agreement on CAP reform.

France (and to a lesser extent most of the other member countries) wants — for domestic social and political reasons — to preserve the essentials of the CAP. Ever since 1979 — under both conservative and socialist administrations — the French assumption has been that in the end the compromise would be that Mrs Thatcher should get most of what she wants on Britain's net contribution; but in return the British goal of using the Community's financial crisis to force a fundamental reform of the CAP would be quietly forgotten.

It makes quite attractive politics for all concerned. President Mitterrand will be able to project himself as the statesman who saved Europe (and French farmers) from the slings and arrows of Attila the Hen. She will be able to present herself as the only Prime Minister since we joined the Community in 1973 to stand up properly to the others. By getting a permanent arrangement for limiting the net British contribution to the Community budget and by getting numbers attached to it that produce a small net figure in the end, she will have no difficulty in saying that she has once again been 'batting for Britain'.

Mrs Thatcher has understood the political need for a Tory government to protect its European flank. The Community remains unpopular with the British electorate, even if that attitude is no longer combined with majority support for coming out of Europe. She is well aware that an actively hostile line towards Brussels could be an electoral asset to a reviving Labour party. Her performance at this summit was part of a move to outflank that threat.

She is also not averse to showing that she is prepared to ignore the advice of civil servants, particularly from diplomats and the Foreign Office. In her eyes they have an effete and unpatriotic readiness to sell Britain down the river in search of diplomatic compromises and a quiet life. (Significantly, British officials in Brussels were reported as being 'stunned' by the breakdown of the summit on Tuesday night. During the afternoon, before Mrs Thatcher made it clear that she was digging in, they thought that things were going reasonably well and were briefing British journalists to that effect.)

BUT WHILE the childish charade at Brussels may make good politics for Mrs Thatcher, it makes lousy economics for Britain. The political principles and political face involved in Britain's net contribution to the Community budget may seem large. But the figures involved are insignificant in comparison with the rest of government policy. The *entire* Community budget represents less than 1 per cent of the output of member states and about 2½ per cent of their total public spending. The difference between the money on the table on Tuesday and what Mrs Thatcher was demanding as her 'fair return' is public expenditure peanuts.

What is anything but peanuts is the economic effect on the British economy of the CAP. Almost 70 per cent of the Community budget goes directly to agriculture. Last year this amounted to about £10 billion. On top of that the real *economic* cost of the CAP needs to be taken into account. This is the difference between what those who live in the Community have to pay for food and the price at which they could buy it on world markets. Serious economists now put this as high as £20 billion a year for the whole Community. On top of this a recent study estimated that, aside from the CAP, national governments have their own extra aids to agriculture worth a further £10 billion a year.

These figures are at the root of the ludicrous imbalance in the Community's finances. A start to serious reform of the CAP is, therefore, a critical British national interest. But, while Mrs Thatcher's government has paid lip service to this fact, there has been no political push behind reform of agricultural finance. It is a complete blind spot in modern Tory dogma about the virtues of competition and free enterprise that it is not expected to apply to agriculture. Removing subsidy and increasing competition is supposed to promote efficiency, for example, in railways, or coal mining. But total protection, increased subsidy and centralised and guaranteed production quotas are accepted without question for agriculture.

A policy towards the Community that was truly in British interests would not have used up all available political capital in getting a face saving formula on the net budget contribution. It would have been working over the last two years to make it absolutely clear to the rest of the Community that overall financial limits must be placed on CAP expenditure and that individual commodity pricing and guarantee policies must be tailored to reducing surpluses within a reasonable time. For good measure we should have insisted that finance ministers — and not just agricultural ministers — be involved in the Community's annual farm price reviews. The test of whether Mrs Thatcher is really batting for Britain is whether she chooses to make any progress on these points by the next summit in Paris in June. □

**If you live in Manchester, Liverpool or Leeds...**

The *New Statesman* is now on sale in the main city centre shops (station bookstalls, John Menzies, W. H. Smith, etc) in **MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL** and **LEEDS** from **THURSDAY** mid-morning onwards. The *NS* has been available in London on Thursdays for many years and if this experiment is a success we hope to increase the number of towns where we can offer this earlier distribution.



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# Eleven deaths after council ignored asbestos evidence

THREE AND A HALF thousand tenants in Glasgow may have to be moved temporarily out of their flats after claims that the asbestos in their flats has already been responsible for the deaths of 11 council building workers.

The Red Road flats, the tallest residential tower blocks in Europe, were built in 1961 and 1969 by Glasgow District Council. Clydeside Action on Asbestos, a Glasgow-based environmental group, has managed to trace 33 of the council construction workers who built the flats. One third of these men are now dead from mesothelioma (the asbestos cancer) and other respiratory tract cancers thought to be directly linked to asbestos.

Next week's Channel 4 consumer programme *4 What It's Worth* (Tuesday 8.30) has obtained a confidential report which shows that the council was fully aware as early as 1967 of the dangers of working with asbestos. The council had asked the Scottish Occupational Health Laboratory Service to carry out a survey of the asbestos dust levels in the flats. The report stated that 'every single dust-generating operation produces asbestos dust levels in excess of the acceptable value. In the vast majority of cases the acceptable level is grossly exceeded'. The report also went on to outline a number of safety precautions that should be taken to protect workers.

According to Ken Hill, the son of one of the mesothelioma victims, the council failed to take any of the necessary steps. Mr Hill, along with others, is now attempting to sue the Council for negligence.

This is the first systematic study of the effects of asbestos on construction workers and, according to Ted Rushworth, Director of the Cancer Prevention Society, the results so far indicate that these workers may be more at risk from asbestos than any other group of workers including those in the asbestos manufacturing industry.

Mesothelioma, on average, manifests itself 30 years after exposure to asbestos and the discovery that 11 out of 33 workers have died within 15 years almost certainly means that the death toll will rise sharply in the next 10 years. Two of the surviving workers have now contracted asbestosis and there are another five outstanding claims for Industrial Disablement Benefit for asbestos related complaints.

*4 What It's Worth* will also be revealing that there are still severe health risks to the current tenants of Red Road. There is broken asbestos in many of the flats and so much asbestos debris in the estate that children use it to mark out their games of hopscotch. Yet Glasgow District Council is refusing to put up warning notices telling the tenants not to carry out any DIY work despite the fact that the walls and ceilings of the flats are made entirely of asbestos.

Nancy McFarlene, chairperson of the Local Community Council, believes that Glasgow District is dragging its heels over carrying out the emergency remedial work necessary on the flats. A Fatal Accident Inquiry is to be held soon into one of the deaths. Clearly, with claims for compensation in the pipeline, the council will not want to be seen to be admitting any liability.

**Gerry Melling**

**That's not chalk — it's asbestos**

# D-day dustcart demo

LONDON COULD find itself blocked by two seperate demonstrations on 29 March. Dustcart drivers, having learnt from the French lorry drivers, are considering a plan to block the capital's roads with their vehicles in support of the march against rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties. And a group of anarchists are planning a second 'Stop the City' demonstration following their sealing-off of several City streets last September which resulted in 203 arrests.

The march next Thursday, 'Democracy Day', is part of a week of activities called by the TUC to highlight opposition to government plans for local authorities. Both NUPE and NALGO have pledged support for any action taken by their members and NUPE official Ian Scott told the *New Statesman*: 'We're encouraging all our members to bring their work with them, whether it's cleaners taking their mops or drivers their dustcarts.' He refused to confirm whether a blockade would be organised but, according to another union source, plans for such an event are well advanced.

At least 20 mayors dressed in full regalia and chains of office will call on Mrs Thatcher in Downing Street. They will hand in bundles of petitions in defence of jobs and services.

But the organisers of the march have been embarrassed by the coincidence of dates with a third event: on 29 March Liverpool City Council has its much-publicised meeting to set its rates for next year which is likely to end in deadlock, taking away much of the hoped-for publicity for Democracy Day.

**Christian Wolmar**

# Union strikes against union

DELEGATES to the TUC Women's Conference in Torquay last week who were invited to the traditional reception laid on by the Banking Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) were met by a picket line comprised of the union's own officials.

The public confrontation was the result of a bitter dispute between BIFU and its staff over the compulsory redundancy of the union's data control manager, Mr Ram Saddul, as part of a restructuring of the computer department. BIFU's 35 senior officials – members of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX) — walked out on strike on 2 March in support of Mr Saddul. They were followed two weeks later by the 17 regional organisers. On Tuesday, the full clerical staff joined the stoppage after voting 57-18 in favour.

The dispute has already caused the postponement of BIFU's national women's conference and brought most negotiations to a standstill, claim the officials. Telephones at the union's Wimbledon headquarters ring unanswered, while pickets surround the building.

APEX has made the dispute official, and says that it is a clear issue of trade unionists defending one of their colleagues. Area Organiser Morris Tonner said: 'APEX is appalled by BIFU's actions and attitudes in this matter'.

BIFU's annual conference last year censured the leadership over the running of the Data Processing Department so it is anxious to overhaul its operation.

But some members of the BIFU executive believe that the issue at stake is control of the union, and whether the officials — who are appointed rather than elected — have too much power. The officials contest this. BIFU staff say that they are not opposed to reorganisation, but that there should be no job losses and Mr Saddul could be retrained. They are demanding his reinstatement with negotiation over his future.

After initially refusing conciliation, BIFU General Secretary Leif Mills this week agreed to take part in exploratory talks at the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service. This follows reports of pressure for a settlement from TUC General Secretary, Len Murray. An emergency meeting of the executive has been called this weekend, but so far there is no sign of an early end to the conflict.

**Kate Holman**



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# No conditions for a nurse

A SENIOR nursing official has called for a ban on training nurses in one of Cornwall's main hospitals due to the cramped and dirty conditions and lack of essential facilities.

But if the ban goes ahead, training in Cornwall will grind to a halt, as the Truro hospital is the only centre for accident training — without which, nurses cannot graduate.

The report by the health authority's Director of Nurse Education, Angela Roques, contains criticisms similar to one submitted last year by her predecessor, and to a General Nursing Council report on the Cornwall training school published in 1981. However, Ms Roques has gone one step further in calling for the immediate withdrawal of the accident and orthopaedic wards for training purposes.

The hospital's accident and emergency departments do not have a sluice. Dirty, infected materials are flushed down toilets designated for patients.

Ms Roques also complains of cramped conditions. 'This can, and I am sure does, lead to dangerous practice,' she says. Nurses have to move furniture before they can draw curtains around patients and they risk injuring the patient in the next bed by bumping into them.

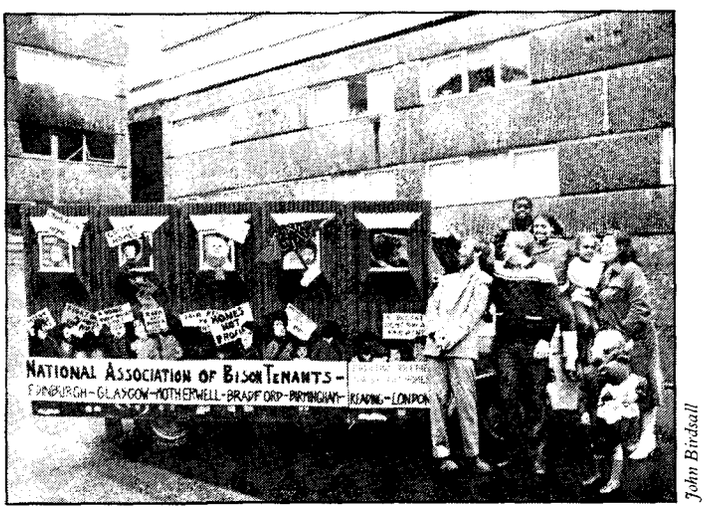
Beds block fire exits, and overcrowding means that nurses can hardly reach patients in some parts of the ward.

Of another ward Ms Roques says: 'The smell of damp hits one on entering. . . on the day I visited there was a large hole in the ceiling under which was draped a plastic cover to catch the water that was dripping through. A bed occupied by a patient was placed directly underneath.'

Ms Roques said that she will not allow trainees to work under such circumstances. However, the only people who can withdraw trainees are the members of the health authority, or the English National Board, formerly the General Nursing Council.

Cornwall's health administrator, George Owens, denied complacency and said that a working party was studying Ms Roques's report. He claimed work to improve the hospital began last week. Meanwhile, it continues to be used for training.

**Graham Smith**




John Birdsall

# Taking the Bison by the horns

*THIS 'BISONMOBILE' is spearheading a campaign by tenants of Bison housing (also in the picture) to get their homes demolished. About 50,000 homes were built under the Bison wallframe system in the sixties and the National Association of Bison Tenants (NABT) reckons that they should all be demolished.*

*Every Bison estate in the 50 local authorities with this type of housing has experienced problems, which are rapidly getting worse as the estates get older. The main defects are structural instability leading to concrete dropping off and water penetration from roofs, walkways and panel connections. Furthermore, the flats are difficult to heat and contain asbestos. The Bison system involved the erection of pre-fabricated systems, marketed by a network of companies in the Bison group, and a number of councils are currently taking legal action against these firms.*

*At least eight local authorities, including Manchester, Newcastle and Nottingham, have agreed to demolish some or all their Bison estates. Now NABT hopes that through the Bisonmobile tour of Bison estates in Scotland and England due to start on Sunday, more will follow. The tenants also want the government to allocate extra housing investment cash for councils with Bison housing and publication of evidence about the problem, collected last year by Housing Minister Ian Gow.*

**Christian Wolmar**

# MISCELLANY

## Commie crook

Nearly 30 years after his penetrating study of The Outsider in literature, Colin Wilson seems finally to have 'got out of his pram' as our leader would say. His latest book, *The Criminal History of Mankind*, published by Granada this week, devotes a chapter to Karl Marx and his followers. Only the *Daily Telegraph* it seems is considering reviewing it, but Wilson managed to plug it on the Brian Hayes phone-in programme on the London radio station LBC. 'Marx was the archetypal criminal,' said Wilson, adding that leftism was a 'germ in society'. Hayes, normally noted for his vehement performance as devil's advocate, remained silent.

## SDP's wood foot

One of the main obstacles to joint selection of canditates by the Liberals and the SDP is that the SDP is keen on its system of a postal ballot of all members, whereas the Liberals prefer a selection meeting. It was fairly remarkable, therefore, when the Liberals agreed to joint selection by postal ballot in the Durham Euro-constituency, despite being outnumbered two-to-one by local SDP members. Even more remarkable was the result: Chris Foote Wood, a Liberal, was selected. This sorry tale is told in the SDP's newspaper, *The Social Democrat*, by David Stoker, one of the SDP contenders for the Alliance candidacy. His article contains bitter asides about the 'dangers of a postal ballot' and the 'unfortunate' non-attendance at the hustings of a fellow contender, Michael Gallagher, the party's only Euro-MP, who defected from the Labour Party in January. Stoker sourly concludes that 'there was little party-voting on our side'.

## Unrest cure

If Mrs Thatcher's government makes your blood boil, emigrate at once. There is a place where emigrés are known to be healthy, and in particular to have low blood pressure, according to medical research reported in the lastest *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*. A survey in 1979 showed that men there had a lower incidence of high blood pressure because of a 'high level of habitual physical activity and a low prevalence of obesity'. Where? The Falkland Islands, of course. How the events of 1982 affected this finding is not recorded.

## Cementing links

Cementation director Jamil Amyuni must have stuck out like a sore thumb among the 350 guests at the dinner held in October 1980 to celebrate Mrs Thatcher's 21 years as an MP. According to a guest, 'there was a sea of faces from the local parties'. Indeed, this is confirmed by the report of the occasion in the *Finchley Press* which lists many local Tory notables including 90-year-old 'veteran' Mrs Mary Clarke who was there along with members of the neighbouring Chipping Barnet, Hendon South and Hendon North constituencies, and the office cleaner. The dinner, at £15 each, raised over £500 for the Trigger riding club for the disabled. Mrs T, presented with a 12-inch-high figurine of herself, said: 'It's lovely to be 21 again.'

## Buying the silver

Chancellor Nigel Lawson has dismissed the idea of redistributive taxation, saying there aren't enough rich people in the country to make it worth while. If the *Financial Times*'s estimates are correct, we don't need that many. Britain's richest man, Gerald Grosvenor, the sixth Duke of Westminster, got £300 million out of the Budget, according to the *FT*, because of the cut in Capital Transfer Tax from 50 per cent to 30 per cent. This is his second £300 million gift from one of Mrs Thatcher's Chancellors. In 1981 the rate was cut from 75 per cent to 50 per cent. If we define 2 million households as living in poverty, that is the equivalent of an Easter bonus of £300 per family.

## Freak tide

What have Richard Nixon, Margaret Thatcher, General Sir John Hackett, William Rees-Mogg, Lord Denning, Chapman Pincher and Gerald Kaufman got in common? They're all contributors to the first issue of a revived version of *Time & Tide*, a right-wing magazine which ceased publication 25 years ago. Publisher William Armstrong sees the aim of the magazine as the promotion of democracy, because of 'the aggressive nature of international communism' threatening world peace. Lord Denning's contribution looks the most interesting from the table of contents which has just been sent to us. Entitled 'Trade Unions on Trial', he says: 'I would ask that they be put on probation. If they obey the law of the land, they should go free. But if they should flout the law, they will find that their end will be at hand.' You'll have to wait for the summer when the magazine comes out for the rest of that fascinating thesis.



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# Caught in the web of Anglo-Irish politics

THE EUPHORIA in Britain and Ireland over the capture and rapid extradition of the Irish National Liberation Army leader, has as much to do with its implications for Anglo-Irish relations, as with any moral abhorrence for a terrorist leader. McGlinchey, accused of terrorist offences, was arrested in the Republic at the end of a week of St Patrick's Day celebrations. Dr Garret Fitzgerald and his ministers used the celebrations to travel across the globe proclaiming the message that joint action is needed between the British and Irish governments to solve the problem of the North by peaceful means.

It is accepted in Dublin that for Britain the bait for such an initiative must be a joint security drive against the IRA. In this context the capture of McGlinchey and his swift handing-over to the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a notable propaganda coup. From the beginning of the troubles, Northern Unionists have pointed to the lack of any extradition from the Republic for 'political offenders' as proof that the South of Ireland is a 'haven for terrorists'. McGlinchey's case also seems likely to pave the way for a number of extradition orders currently before the Irish courts.

The legal aspects of the McGlinchey case, in particular the speed with which it was dealt last Saturday, are already causing concern in the South — not just among Republican sympathisers. An extradition order had already been granted against McGlinchey in the Irish Supreme Court, but he jumped bail. When he was arrested on Saturday, his lawyer immediately sought a successful injunction to stop the Irish police from handing the prisoner over to the RUC, until the extradition argument could be heard in the courts. Later that night, a special sitting of the Irish supreme court overturned the injunction. The Chief Justice argued that McGlinchey had abused the system of the courts and had therefore forfeited their sympathy. But this decision leaves a number of loose ends. For a start, McGlinchey is also wanted for a number of crimes in the Republic which logically should have been dealt with first.

Secondly, his defence counsel, a highly respected constitutional lawyer, had anncounced the intention of challenging the constitutionality of the 1965 Extradition Act. Such constitutional cases are usually taken as a matter of high priority. Finally, there is the Chief Justice's definition of a political crime as 'an offence committed in the course of what reasonable people would regard as political activity'. If this precedent is followed, it will dramatically change the traditional concept of a political crime. This has been much closer to the definition first enuniciated by John Stuart Mill during the parliamentary debate on the British Extradition Act in 1870 as 'an offence committed in the course of furthering civil war, insurrection or political commotion'.

It is hard to suppress the suspicion that McGlinchey was handed over to the RUC for politcal reasons as much as legal ones. Both Northern Ireland Secretary Jim Prior and the Irish government would like to see swift progress on an Anglo-Irish initiative following the publication of the New Ireland Forum's report next month. Prior knows that his best chance of selling such an initiative to the Tory Party, and maybe even to Northern Unionists, would be to offer the prospect of real progress on the security front.

Dublin and London are already discussing quite radical proposals including the setting up of an all-Ireland court and the involvement of Irish security forces north of the border. If they could get this off the ground, the argument goes, much closer political links between North and South are bound to follow. Already this has set alarm bells ringing in the minds of Northern Unionists like the Rev Ian Paisley who suspect, probably rightly, that any joint action in the security front between Dublin and London would lead to a significant *de facto* diminution of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland.

**Mary Holland**

'MAD DOG' BACK IN THE ARMS OF THE LAW

TERRORIST leader Dominic "Mad Dog" McGlinchey, Ireland's most wanted man, was handed over to Ulster police yesterday in a historic extradition.

It was the first time a top terrorist suspect has been sent back to Northern Ireland to face trial.

By VICTOR GHAPPLE

Last night McGlinchey, the Irish National Liberation Army leader who boasts of 20 murders and 200 bombings

expecting her third child any day now and could have been smuggled abroad.

**The *Sun* ensures a fair trial for McGlinchey**

# Cops in the classroom

AN ALLEGATION that a Southall school handed an ex-pupil's photograph and school records to the police has re-kindled anxiety about the role of the police in schools.

Last December an ex-pupil of Dormers Wells School, Ealing, was questioned for 10 hours in Southall police station about a burglary. He was never charged with any offence. The boy, who is black, claims that the two officers questioning him had an old school photograph, and a white file which he thinks also came from the school. 'They kept referring to the file. It looked like they had a lot of information about me. For them to have so much information, it must have been from the school,' he said.

The school have since admitted handing over the photograph to the police but deny giving over the school report. Ealing's Chief Education Officer and the school's governors are now investigating the boy's claim, and Ealing Council is soon to debate the whole issue of school records, including demands for parental access.

This is not the first incident of its kind. Chingford High School has admitted that in June of last year staff handed over the records of an 11-year-old black boy to the police. The school has since apologised 'sincerely'. And an internal inquiry is soon due to report in the claim of a 19-year-old black woman student at Tottenham Technical College that staff there showed her personal records to the police.

Several groups, including the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) and the GLC Police Committee are now monitoring these cases and looking at their wider implications.

ACE believes that the casual transfer of information from schools to police is becoming more frequent and is related to the growth in police-school liaison schemes. While both the police and a recent HMI report have extolled the virtues of these schemes, ACE argues that police are adopting a surveillance, rather than educative, role and that schools and parents should be aware of the implications.

Legal protection against police access to school records or premises is minimal. Neither the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill nor the Data Protection Bill, currently going through Parliament, protects school records from police use.

**Melissa Benn**

# Members voted against the Left

NEARLY HALF of the constituency Labour parties in London balloted their members over the election of leader and deputy leader last year, rather than leaving it up to their General Committees to decide, according to a survey by the party. The survey shows clearly that this trend worked against candidates seen as left wing.

Of the parties holding ballots open to all their members, 17 voted for Roy Hattersley as deputy and three for Michael Meacher. Of the parties whose ballots were restricted to members attending branch meetings or whose General Committees decided, only seven voted for Hattersley, and 50 voted for Meacher.

The survey carried out by the Greater London Labour Party reveals a bewildering variety of democratic methods. Just under half of constituency parties decided by membership ballot, effectively excluding trade union voting power on General Committees. But only half of these held full postal ballots — and only two automatically sent out ballot forms to all members, rather than requiring members to claim their vote. The others required members to come to branch meetings to cast their vote but allowed postal votes under certain conditions.

A further fifth held branch ballots to mandate General Committee delegates; so a total of nearly two-thirds of parties consulted their members in some way or other.

The survey showed that the more members involved, the more likely the vote would be to go to Hattersley rather than Meacher for deputy. Ballots open to all members achieved an average 'turnout' of 51 per cent, and voted overwhelmingly for Hattersley, in three cases overturning GC nominations for Meacher. Ballots restricted to members at meetings achieved an average poll of 24 per cent — and seven out of eight voted for Meacher.

As far as the leadership election went, every single ballot of members voted for Neil Kinnock, even in Islington North, where the General Committee had nominated Eric Heffer.

Sixty-seven constituency parties out of a total of 84 replied to a questionnaire sent out last October. Although the replies reveal considerable resistance to SDP-style postal ballots, twice as many parties adopted the 'alien' single transferable vote (STV) system in their ballots as the first-past-the-post system.

**John Rentoul**



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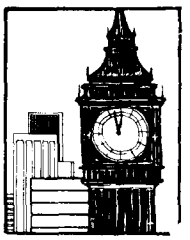

**PETER KELLNER** Political Editor

# Lawson's plans for your taxes: the (almost) authorised version

HERE ARE TWO recent newspaper headlines: 'Lawson plans tax shake-up for budget'; and 'Tax: Lawson plans sweeping changes'. Not, on the face of it, a lot between them. There are, however, three differences that, taken together, speak eloquently of the secrecy and rituals that afflict Britain's system of government. The first headline, in the *Guardian*, appeared before the budget; the second, in the *Sunday Times*, appeared afterwards. The source of the *Guardian* story was an 'unauthorised' mole; the source of the *ST* story was Nigel Lawson. The *Guardian* story is the subject of a police investigation; the *ST* story is not.

Careful readers of enough newspapers can usually tell when a story has been planted at a lobby briefing. The same information appears simultaneously in a number of papers. It appears either unsourced, or attributed to 'Whitehall sources' — a term which, taken literally, could mean anything from the Prime Minister to a KGB spy waiting for a No. 11 bus. Under the rules of the game, lobby briefings 'never take place'. If a minister talks garrulously 'on lobby terms' to a number of journalists and is later challenged in the Commons by MPs, he can deny ever having said what the hacks carefully noted down. At least, that is the theory. It is time to put it to the test.

We have the opportunity because of the cackhanded way in which Lawson has responded to the *Guardian*'s pre-budget leak which accurately predicted many of his budget measures. As Hugo Young and Anne Sloman reveal in their excellent story of the Treasury, *But Chancellor**, a manual of guidance is prepared each winter, setting out in the minutest detail what is to be done when and by whom. This manual includes the Chancellor's arrangements for briefing journalists. Last week this shadowy process was suddenly illuminated, when the *Guardian's* financial editor, Hamish McRae, was suddenly disinvited to Lawson's 'non-existent' morning-after chat.

It would be overstating it to say that what now follows is the result of elaborate detective work. This column, sparing no effort to penetrate Whitehall's mask, read Thursday morning's newspapers. There was one surprise: McRae, who had not been at Lawson's briefing, wrote a detailed account of what 'senior Treasury sources' had said; while Kenneth Fleet of *The Times*, who had been at the briefing, wrote nothing. (*The Times* took its version from the Press Association.) McRae used his wits and resources to discover what Lawson had said; we shall draw a veil over what happened at *The Times:* it does not concern the thrust of our argument.

To avoid the impression that this column is merely culled from last Thursday's papers, I should make it clear that our inquiries did not stop there. We read Sunday's papers, too. Like Thursday's papers, the Sundays had strikingly similar stories about Lawson's future intentions. Anthony Bevins, *The Times*'s political correspondent, reported the next day that 'the Chancellor has spoken of his long-term purpose in a private briefing with Sunday newspaper correspondents'.

Useful to have that confirmation from one of the lobby's most assiduous ferrets: so the Sundays obtained their story from the horse's mouth, not from one of its other orifices, such as Sir Peter Middleton, the Permanent Secretary. We now know that Lawson spoke twice to journalists about his future tax plans: on Wednesday of last week to the financial journalists of daily newspapers, and on Friday to the political correspondents of the Sundays. This is what he told them.

AT HIS WEDNESDAY briefing Lawson said he had done enough this year for low-paid workers by raising the tax thresholds by more than the rate of inflation. He was therefore not going to increase child benefits in real terms: they will only rise in line with inflation, which implies a 35p increase in November.

Looking further ahead, Lawson said future tax reforms would be concentrated on the personal sector. His main concerns were thresholds and allowances, rather than bringing the standard rate down to 25 per cent. This, he said, was now 'an aspiration' rather than a commitment. In particular, Lawson wants to reduce the taxes paid by higher-paid workers. In 1984/85 people will start paying higher-rate tax if their taxable earnings are above £15,400. Earnings on the next £2,800 will be taxed at 40 per cent, and higher earnings at steadily higher rates. Lawson told the financial journalists that he intends increasing the starting point for higher taxation significantly, and that he will also widen the 40 per cent band.

Lawson said he would like to offset some of the costs of these tax cuts by limiting further the allowances that can be set against tax. However, he disclosed difficulties: reducing tax allowances on pension payments presented complex problems that might prove insoluble. As for tax relief on mortgage interest payments, Lawson admitted that his hands were tied: Mrs Thatcher, he said, considered this relief 'sacrosanct'.

If money were available in a future budget, Lawson said he would like to help the better-off more by simplifying the rules on capital gains tax and capital transfer tax (which replaced estate duty), and by reducing the tax rates.

Where Lawson saw taxes rising — in part to pay for the tax concessions he outlined — was in a steady year-by-year increase in the range of goods and services that attracted VAT. This spring's extension to building alterations and take-away food will bring the government an extra £650 million a year and add just under 0.5 per cent to the rate of inflation. By expanding the VAT net by the same amount in each future year, Lawson will be able to add cumulatively to the government's income without adding any further to the inflation rate. (Each new 0.5 per cent rise on prices will occur just as the previous year's rise disappears from the year-on-year rate.)

IN HIS BRIEFING for Sunday journalists, Lawson went further. He said that he would widen the VAT net by introducing a multi-tier system. He would start by introducing a second, lower VAT rate which he could use to bring into VAT such things as electricity, public transport and some food (although not fresh food). Putting VAT on electricity would have the political advantage of providing the Exchequer with its money through the front door, as a tax, rather than through the back door, as an imposed tariff increase.

Lawson also went further on pensions and mortgage relief in his second briefing, saying that despite she-who-must-be-obeyed he would like to tackle them. What he didn't say, but can be inferred, is that limiting both sets of allowances to the standard tax rate could be used as a quid pro quo for concessions to the better-paid over higher-rate tax bands.

Lawson told the Sunday journalists that he wanted to tackle the anomalies of married couples' taxation; but this could not be done quickly, and a Green Paper would be issued first.

There will be many opportunities in the next year or two to debate and analyse the merits of Lawson's strategy. For the moment a more urgent need presents itself: to strip away the ludicrous secrecy that attends budget-making. Four years ago the Armstrong Committee, working under the aegis of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, showed how the government could publish a draft budget each year, to be subjected to open debate before final decisions were taken. Lawson, the 'reforming Chancellor', has done nothing to promote this, the most important reform of all: instead he has launched a police inquiry and petty vendetta against the *Guardian*, which made its own freelance contribution to open government.

I hope MPs will challenge Lawson to confirm my account of his two post-budget briefings. If he does, he will start to rehabilitate the good name of reform. And if he denies my account, he is lying. □

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# Last stand or orderly retreat

**Walter Pond explains the development of the strategy of the 'flying picket' in the late 1960s and why it isn't working now**

THE VIEWING and reading public have been given the impression that the young miners' pickets — dodging police roadblocks, sleeping rough and speeding down the motorways of Britain — are playing out some doomed attempt to re-enact the national coal strikes of 1972 and 1974. Those who are organising the pickets, however, look back to two lesser known dates in the history of the National Union of Mineworkers — 1969 and 1970.

For the pickets' leader, these are *the* key dates in the radicalisation of the union, in the rise of Arthur Scargill and in the development of the strategy of sending flying pickets into more moderate coalfields. The picketing technique of the last week has also been broadly repeated. First the arrival of a small group of Yorkshire miners to lobby the pit, then some pickets from a pit on the verge of being 'picketed out' and then the arrival of pickets in numbers. In 1969

Chris Davies/Network

**Arthur Scargill: old tactics**

and 1970 the tactic was not entirely successful, but it won the union two major pay claims and paved the way for the greater dramas of 1972 and 1974.

In the 12 months to March 1969, 55 pits had been closed and 55,000 men had left the industry. Another 40 of the then 300 collieries faced closures over the next year. Despite this pressure of retrenchment, the Yorkshire Area, as now, decided independently in October 1969 to go on strike over pit closures, pay and surface workers' hours. Within two days of some pits going on strike in Yorkshire, the entire Area's coalfield was on strike and by the end of the week vigorous flying pickets had, as now, spread the strike to about half the rest of the coalfield.

Similarly in October 1970, Yorkshire members acted as a catalyst for an unofficial strike following a national ballot which showed a 55 per cent majority for a national strike (less than the 60 per cent majority then needed).

**Per cent for strike action**

| Area | Members (approx.) | Jan '82 | Oct '82 | March '83 | March '84 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cumberland** | 650 | 52 | 36 | 42 | 22 |
| **Derbyshire** | 10,500 | 50 | 40 | 38 | 50 |
| **S. Derbyshire** | 3,000 | 16 | 13 | 2 | 16 |
| **Durham** | 13,000 | 46 | 31 | 39 | — |
| **Kent** | 2,000 | 54 | 69 | 68 | — |
| **Leicester** | 2,500 | 20 | 13 | 8 | — |
| **Midlands** | 12,000 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 27 |
| **Nottingham** | 32,000 | 30 | 21 | 19 | 26 |
| **Lancashire** | 7,500 | 40 | 44 | 39 | 41 |
| **Northumberland** | 5,000 | 37 | 32 | 35 | 52 |
| **Scotland** | 11,500 | 63 | 69 | 50 | — |
| **Yorkshire** | 56,000 | 66 | 56 | 54 | — |
| **North Wales** | 1,000 | 18 | 24 | 23 | 36 |
| **South Wales** | 21,000 | 54 | 59 | 68 | — |
| **Colliery Officials** | 16,000 | 14 | 10 | 15 | — |
| **Cokemen** | 4,500 | 32 | 22 | 39 | — |
| **National Average** | | 45 | 39 | 39 | — |

Flying pickets, again from Doncaster, Barnsley and South Yorkshire, quickly pushed into the moderate coalfields. Lord Robens, the then chairman of the National Coal Board wrote in his memoirs that 'the hooliganism could no longer be denied; detailed reports reaching me from all over the country showed the extent to which an influential and determined body of men were prepared to go'. Then, as now, there were reports of intimidation, violence, and moderate miners fighting for the right to work.

Many of the miners who came to prominence in those strikes, most importantly Mr Scargill himself, are now running the union. In 1969 and 1970 they emerged from the rank-and-file to challenge a reluctant leadership. Despite the declining state of the industry, they struck in a period when the British working class remained confident. Miners themselves also felt that they had a legitimate grievance over pay — which has since been eradicated by a series of large wage increases.

The real problem for Mr Scargill now is that he is reliving the events of the late 1960s in the entirely different political and economic climate of the 1980s. Then, as now, Scargill was sure that leadership — an old fashioned concept in trade unionism — can lead essentially reluctant miners out of their despond.

BUT CIRCUMSTANCES have changed. First, 1969 was a movement led from below. Mick McGahey, the Scottish miners' leader later explained: 'October 1969 clearly demonstrated that miners are no longer prepared to await long drawn out negotiations and, if the leaders do not act, they will lose the leadership; the rank-and-file will take action themselves'. In the current dispute, the leadership can hardly be accused of holding back its membership. It took only one unofficial picket at Harworth on the Notts/South Yorks border for the Yorkshire Area executive to endorse flying pickets. Similarly, in North Derbyshire the executive decided to ignore the result of its area ballot and order its members out on strike.

Mr Scargill himself has engaged in bizarre arithmetic to 'prove' that there is a majority of miners in favour of strike action — in the face of evidence (see table) that he is on course to get only about a 45 per cent vote in favour of striking. Mr Scargill's wriggling is strange from a man who once told *Marxism Today* (April 1981) that

> we've got a lot of hypocrites in the labour movement... it seems to me to be the height of stupidity and certainly hypocritical to argue for democracy — and then argue against democracy

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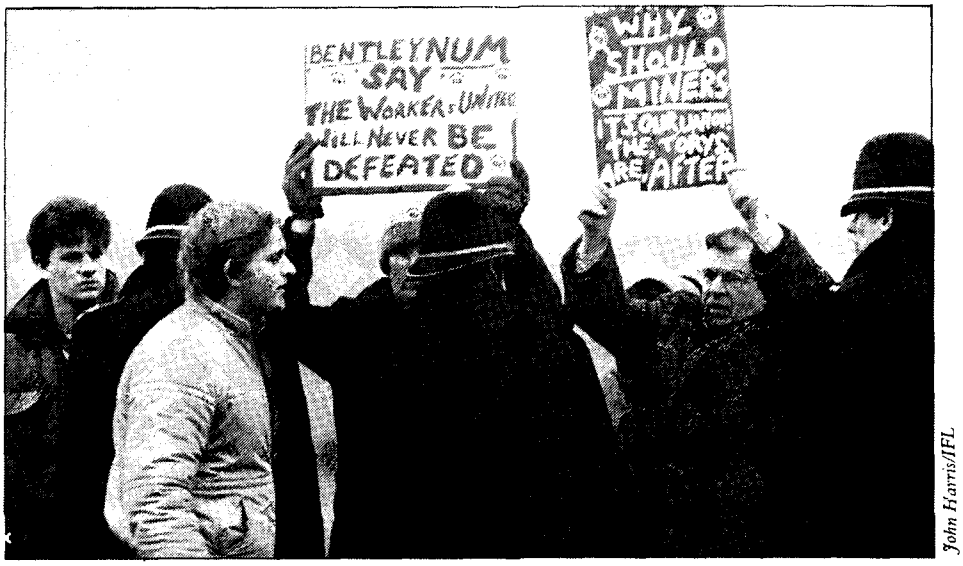


John Harris/IFL

**On most picket lines the 'conversation has been orderly, if brusque': here a Notts miner is protected by police as he goes to work.**

because you say the PR system is a system that cannot work in the interests of the working class. Those people who say that, are really saying that we cannot win 50 per cent of the electorate in Britain for an alternative policy and my answer is this: if we cannot win 50 per cent of the electorate in Britain for an alternative policy, then quite frankly we ought not to be putting forward our political views and policies for their consideration.

The second change since 1969 is that the mass media take an obsessive interest in anything the NUM does. Mr Scargill himself thinks that the Media's influence has been so pernicious that it is almost impossible to have the democracy within the NUM. Indeed, one argument advanced by militant pickets last week to justify their action was that the media could no longer be trusted to put forward the arguments over pit closures fairly, so instead miner had to go and talk directly to miner.

On 80 per cent of the picket lines this conversation between miner and miner has been orderly, if brusque. The typical line of patter has been: 'this is an official Yorkshire Area picket line and we would ask you to support it. Almost all your mates have not gone in, so don't let yourself or your union down'. If a miner turns back there is applause: if not, there have been shouts of 'scab' and, occasionally, something worse.

Unfortunately, such scenes are not news and the media have almost exclusively concentrated on picket lines where there has been violence. The pickets have come to see the media as predators waiting for the worst. Increasingly, cameramen and journalists came to be jostled by the pickets, until now there is simply no communication between pickets and press.

But the damage has been done. The scenes of violence — often more akin to football 'aggro' than political violence — turned mining communities against the strike. Collieries where the pits was actually in a village, locals came out to bait the pickets and cheer their men into work.

Nottinghamshire miners' leaders, for instance, are convinced that they could have close to a majority in their area for a strike, but for the violence depicted to TV.

The third change since 1969 is the increasing disparity between the peripheral, mainly left led pits, and the central right-wing led pits. Capital investment has been increasingly concentrated in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire as the coalfields of South Wales and Scotland have been run down in the face of geological exhaustion. The South Wales area, for instance, has made an operating loss in every year since 1976, while North Nottinghamshire has always made a profit. For instance, Ollerton and Thoresby — the scenes of some of the heaviest picketing in Notts last week — are two of the most profitable collieries in the whole of the British coalfield.

SINCE 1978 the miners' productivity scheme has massively altered relationships. This meant that miners at productive and profitable collieries such as Ollerton earn far more than miners working less rich seams. One picket told me last week that he earnt about £20 a week from the incentive scheme, while miners at the pit which he was picketing earned around £13 a day. More than a few pickets characterised the Notts men as 'greedy I'm-all-right-Jacks'.

This division within the union was exactly what Scargill feared when he fought the incentive scheme's introduction. 'One rate for the job' has been the underlying argument of the Miners Next Step of 1912 and the miners of Tonypandy two years earlier. Their cause has now been lost. Over a fifth of miners' wages are made up of productivity deals, with average payments for faceworks reaching £45 a week in 1982.

The fifth change since 1969 is the Conservative government's determination to 'buy out' miners. On 25 March 1981, just two months after the government's capitulation over pit closures, the NCB announced major improvements in its redundancy scheme. They were complex, but clearly directed at miners aged between 50 and 60. Lump sum payments to miners aged between 50 and 55 were doubled and the period of weekly benefit paid to retired miners was extended. A miner aged 55 with 35 years' service became entitled to £35,481, an increase of £11,373. Under the 1983 Coal Industry Act the eligibility age for weekly benefit was lowered from 55 to 50.

The recent select Committee Report in Energy found that the NCB had budgeted to pay out £105m in 1983/84 under the Redundant Mineworkers Payment Scheme, but in the event the number of redundancies over the year (20,000) had led to an eventual pay out of £193m. This year the government expects redundancy payments to be £243m.

Not all this increase will be due to larger numbers of miners taking redundancy. It is largely due to the fact that the NCB has again improved redundancy terms. The scheme has now been redirected at miners aged under 50.

The reasoning is simple and can be seen from the second table. As the Select Committee Report commented: 'if the scale and age pattern of redundancies in 1983-84 is repeated in 1984-85, the number of miners aged over 50 will be relatively small by the end of the year.

John Sturrock/Network

**Ian McGregor: new management style**

Consequently, the scope for further voluntary redundancies in this age group may become more and more limited.' In short, the NCB has so far been able to avoid compulsory redundancies in its closure programme, but without now redirecting its redundancy scheme at those aged under 50, the pool of volunteers will soon become too small. The average age of mineworkers has fallen steadily from a peak of 44.2 years in December 1973 to 38.7 years in December 1982 — the lowest figure since 1947.

In the face of these payments, the NUM has been largely helpless. At least until last week, when the latest 'improvements' in the scheme were announced, the NUM was able to argue with miners in their 40s that a lump sum payment of £10,000 would not last. But now the pay off could reach double that figure. The union is left only with the argument that it is irresponsible to sell a job which should be handed down to others.

The presence of a sufficient number of

## National Coal Board men on books by age

| Date | under 50 | 50-54 | 55 + | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **End March '81** | 161,492 | 26,546 | 35,803 | 224,841 |
| **End March '82** | 158,299 | 24,416 | 30,128 | 212,843 |
| **End March '83** | 154,274 | 23,530 | 24,865 | 202,689 |
| **End Sept '83** | 151,028 | 22,526 | 18,104 | 191,658 |



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miners prepared to take redundancy, or reluctantly to accept transfer to another pit, has deprived the NUM of a rallying cry. Mr Scargill clearly hoped that the coincidence of Mr Ian MacGregor's announcement of a cut back in 4 million tonnes of capacity this year with a rash of strikes in the Yorkshire coalfield might provide the spark to set the coalfields alight. It did not happen. Mr Scargill may find an orderly retreat from the battlefield, via a national ballot, becomes the only option open. After all, there is always next year. □

COAL INDUSTRY 2

# Police strikeforce

## Matthew Campbell on the myth of the 'right to picket'

THE NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers has provoked what must be the largest police operation in peacetime since the General Strike of 1926. Meanwhile, the National Coal Board has temporarily shelved its action against the NUM for allowing its members to picket other areas contrary to an injunction granted against 'unlawful picketing'.

What is not generally recognised is that there is no right to picket in this country — peacefully or otherwise — and that any picketing which goes on does so only by leave of the police, who have absolute operational control in such situations.

The notion of a 'right to picket' grew up alongside the myth of free speech in this country. It seems to be enshrined in Section 15 of the 1974 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (as amended by the 1980 Employment Act) which states:

> It shall be lawful for a person in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute to attend at or near his own place of work . . . for the purpose only of peacefully obtaining or communicating information, or peacefully persuading any person to work or abstain from working.

But in fact this merely ensures immunity from certain types of *civil* claims in increasingly narrowly-defined circumstances. It does nothing to protect pickets from being arrested and charged with a variety of criminal offences, where the courts are almost certain to convict on the basis of police evidence. Examples abound:

- In 1960 Lord Chief Justice Parker said that the local police have power to decide on the number of pickets in *every* case, when he upheld a prosecution against a third picket for obstructing an officer who had decided that two was the limit.
- An attempt by police to prevent pickets communicating with strike-breakers at St Thomas's Hospital in 1973 led to the conviction of a TGWU official for assault and obstructing the police.
- A 'not guilty' decision in the case of picket in the 1972 building workers' strike, charged with obstructing the highway when he managed to delay a lorry for nine minutes, was overturned on appeal by the House of Lords.

John Sturrock/Network

**Thorsby Colliery, Notts: the myth of police 'neutrality'**

The frequency and success of such prosecutions have the practical effect of outlawing all but the most ineffective of pickets. The police have long made known their view that the criminal law as it stands is enough to enable them to cope with pickets. The Police Federation even opposed the extension of civil sanctions against pickets contained in the 1980 Employment Act and its associated Code of Conduct on these grounds.

In spite of such reservations, shared incidentally by many senior judges, the Thatcher administration embarked on a series of measures to restrict picketing and other trade union activities. Since this initiative was more a political public relations exercise than a serious attempt to codify existing civil law, the attendant publicity produced not only a rash of injunctions, but further confusion as to what is lawful or not.

AS INJUNCTIONS now accumulate like litter on the landscape of industrial relations, lawyers are complaining that it is no longer worth opposing them, so easily are they granted (viz the NCB injunction against 'unlawful picketing' whatever that is).

The law here is amorphous. The difficult distinction between 'unlawfulness' and 'criminality' is encouraged by a press which talks of pickets 'in defiance' of an injunction addressed to their leadership, by magistrates who take a dim view of picketing anyway, and by a police force which resorts to illegal roadblocks, stop and search operations and other forms of intimidation to dissuade peaceful trade unionists of good character from fighting for their jobs in the only way available to them.

Police involvement in industrial disputes is, of course, not new. And, as any pop festival-goer or inhabitant of Toxteth or Brixton will attest, stop and search operations are an essential ingredient of modern policing methods. What has surprised some is the scale and intensity of the police response in this miners' dispute. The old line that it is the function of the police to uphold the law and not the State is wearing increasingly thin. The shift away from yesterday's voluntary system of industrial relations to a hardline, take-it-or-leave-it approach in the style of managers like MacGregor in coal or Edwardes in British Leyland seriously undermines the myth of police 'neutrality' in this area.

Perhaps this is why they are at last taking the wraps off the National Recording Centre at Scotland yard, headed by David Hall, Chief Constable of Humberside, and responsible for the co-ordination of 8,000 officers from all over the country being deployed to contain the mass picketing. But the Home Office is at pains to point out that this is *not* the first step toward establishing a National Police Force.

The response is related to the police's need to lay the ghost of Saltley Coke Depot. This great picketing victory for the trade union movement during the 1972 miners' dispute was a major defeat for the police, and provided the main impetus for the setting up of a nationally-coordinated structure, developed from the old civil defence Police Support Units. The fact is that mass picketing is the only form of picketing that is really effective in many industrial disputes, since it stretches a local police force to the point where it cannot cope.

The experience of the building workers' strike, the miners' strike, Hadfields, Grunwick, the Stockport Messenger have given the police time to develop a new response which aims not so much to 'uphold the law' as to maintain order by clearing the streets. If it is *not* possible to arrest thousands of pickets, it *is* possible to mount massive police operations which delay and frustrate political and industrial action by closing motorway exits, searching for weapons, allocating coach parks miles from the dispute, and generally harassing activists. □

*Matthew Campbell works for Release.*

## THIS ENGLAND

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□A police inspector told an inquest yesterday that he was not immediately concerned at the sight of a prisoner tied up with a rope, a belt and two pairs of handcuffs, who was being held around the head by a colleague on the floor of a police station. — *Guardian* (Chris Bragg)

□As a great admirer of the Royal Family, I was disgusted to see that two of the animals in the special Post Office issue of stamps showing rare breeds of cattle had their hindquarters turned towards the Queen's face. Surely face to face would have been more dignified — Letter in *Daily Express* (Mr L. Brooks)



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TRADE UNIONS

# A conference of one's own

**Sarah Benton reports on the effects on the TUC women's conference of the partial victories of recent years**

AT FIRST sight, the TUC's annual women's conference, held last week in Torquay, has been transformed. Television has arrived, washing the hall in bright lights and a sense of importance. This was the first time I had attended since 1977 and there were other immediate signs of progress. The town hall was jam-packed with delegates — 323 compared with 191 in 1975. There were a few black faces, though the one set of Rastafarian plaits hung from the head of a white plumber, the UCATT delegate. She was a woman though.

But after letting one's eyes adjust, other changes seemed so slight as to be surely imperceptible for those who go every year. The Torquay trade unionist welcoming the delegates (fewer than 10 per cent of whom were men) still offers fraternal greetings although the WAC — Woman's Advisory Committee — itself now invites sororal delegates. And Marie Patterson still reigns over the Conference, as she has for the last 12 years, looking more than ever like a wooden Dutch doll with her round, rosy cheeks, cap of smooth hair and rigid posture. She, who steadfastly through the years refused to be a chairwoman, has finally consented to be a chair.

In fact, the relation between the September TUC — with its great floodlit hall, its bank of facilities and expensive hotels, its throng of fringe meetings and famous names, and coffee, tea and alcohol available at any time — and the women's event is like nothing so much as the relation between the luncheon at the Oxbridge men's college, of delectable dishes and yellow and crimson wines, and the dinner at the women's — of gravy soup, and meat and two veg and prunes and custard with water to drink, described with wry eloquence by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*. 'One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. The lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes.'

Nor does the lamp in the spine light well standing on Newton Abbot station in the chill evening, buffet long since closed, waiting for the connection to Torquay (only one direct train a day). Torquay's bay and seafront are lovely, with most of the hotels grouped around it — which meant a 15-minute tramp up and down hills to the conference hall. Inside (refreshments available for an hour in the morning and evening) delegates shivered until the central heating came on, with such a monumental rumbling and vibrating of pipes that an army of men with pneumatic drills appeared to be trying to penetrate the ceiling.

A small coterie of fringe meetings is tentatively thrusting up round the sessions, but, held in hotel rooms a 20-minute walk away from the conference, with no star speakers, they attracted few delegates.

BUT WHAT was actually discussed, what did the women decide, how did they shape the next year of women's trade union activity? What, come to think of it, is women's trade union activity, as distinct from men's, or as distinct from women's concerns in general? For the characteristic that has always most distinguished the women's conference from the men's (not an unfair title when only 121 of the 1,155 TUC delegates in 1983 were women) is the lack of boundaries on women's concerns.

Sheila Gray/Format

**Marie Patterson: not a chairwoman, but a chair**

This year they had science and engineering and new technology, low pay and equal pay, sexual harassment, homelessness, poverty in the Third World, prison education, privatisation, hearing tests, health and smoking and how to ease Marie Patterson out of always being the chair (or at least that's how she saw it). Here, with its compassionate concern for health and housing, is one authentic voice of campaigning working-class women, once heard so clearly in the Co-op Women's Guilds, before that movement died and the women got packed off into the Labour Party Women's Sections to run bazaars and service the men.

The concern has always been radical, touching, from the earliest days, a fundamental sense that women must know about and control their own bodies. The historic breakthrough in recent trade unionism was 1975, when an amendment from ASTMS got an unexpectedly large majority committing the TUC's women's conference to women's right to free abortion on demand. The Tobacco Workers went on to push that motion through the TUC proper, an action that probably saved abortion rights in parliament.

Since then, almost no motion to do with women has been ruled out of order. This year, the delegates passed an emergency resolution in support of Greenham Common women, coming stutteringly to their feet in the one standing ovation of conference, but when Patterson smoothly ruled out resolutions on the bitter NGA and NUJ disputes and carried on without a vote (her right), not one voice was raised to heckle or protest.

And looking at the rest of the General Council members who would be eligible to be the 'rotating chair' demanded by the banking union BIFU, it is perhaps not surprising that this motion did not get passed. Of the 15 General Council members on WAC, six are women, nine are men — of whom six sent their apologies rather than attend. Len Murray, sitting like grey clay on Thursday morning, stirred briefly to cry 'GCHQ' to the handful of reporters huddled on the one narrow press table below, and then silently disappeared.

Women in trade unions are thus poorly served by their leaders, but this is no revelation. This year the TUC does appear to be taking a genuine lead in changing this, issuing a report on how to achieve equality for women within trade unions. Its report was based on a questionnaire to its 102 affiliated unions, of which 49 filled it in and sent it back. It concludes that 'it is not surprising that some women trade unionists have become impatient at what they take to be a lack of interest in their particular needs and are pressing their unions for policies and attitudes which would reflect their views...' The report itself coyly refuses to mention a single union by name and the anonymity makes it an indistinct and waffly read.

Nonetheless it is good to know that 'most unions who responded have established women's advisory or equal opportunities committees... these include all but one of the larger unions and in three others the matter is actively under review...' That appears to confirm that sometime at the end of the 1970s a new generation of active women trade unionists reached a compromise settlement with the existing structure. There are women's committees, and from the TUC a growing stream of attractive reports — a glossy one just out on images of women in the media — on women's political concerns. Before, these would never have been pushed beyond the Cerberus at the doors of the TUC, Ethel Chipchase, the old WAC Secretary. Yet along with the formal victories has come the withering way of the women's energy and optimism at grassroots level. When Ms Patterson called for the debate to begin on the report on women in unions, not a single delegate wished to speak.

Much of the life of this conference has been pinched out of it. Those feminists who have remained active, are bored and tired. The ideology of oppression does not wear well; to complain of being a victim, of being worse off, of suffering more takes on the tone of habitual nagging, the familiar voice of those doomed to perpetual powerlessness.

Such flatness is intensified by the diversion of direct union-employer conflicts into conflicts between State and forms of popular organisation — such as mass pickets versus the police — or between local councils and national government. (It's the GLC which now sponsors conferences on equal pay.) Meanwhile, the peculiar exploitation of women's labour — the steady growth of casual and part-time work — continues unchecked. Between such women workers — in 1981 22.4 per cent of *all* 20-60 year-old women, compared with 5.2 per cent in 1951 — and traditional trade unionism there are almost no points of contact. □



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ANNIVERSARY

# Humane socialist

**William Morris was born 150 years ago. Mervyn Jones finds that his political and social insights remain very contemporary**

WILLIAM MORRIS was born in 1834, founded a workshop to raise artistic standards of design in 1862, and became a propagandist for Socialism in 1883. He was seen by contemporaries as an artist who surprisingly — very surprisingly for those who had admired his stained-glass windows in churches or his decoration of the Throne Room in St James's Palace — switched tracks to Socialism. But Morris saw himself, as he made clear in recapitulating his development, as a man who had to be a Socialist because he was an artist, and only regretted that he took years to realise it. As we follow his thinking through his lectures and writings, we see the precision of his attack on 'commerce' and on 'civilisation' (a word that he used to denote the complacency of Victorian society) sharpening until he uncovers the roots of the jungle.

Take, for example, his grasp of the workings of imperialism. In a lecture given in 1879, he pointed out:

> While we are met here in Birmingham to further the spread of education in art, Englishmen in India are, in their short-sightedness, actively destroying the very sources of that education — jewellery, metal-work, pottery . . . carpet-making — all the famous and historical arts of the great peninsula have been for long treated as matters of no importance, to be thrust aside for the advantage of any paltry scrap of so-called commerce . . . These poor people have all but lost the one distinction, the one glory that conquest had left them. Their famous wares . . . must be sought for and treasured as precious relics for the museums we have founded for our art education. In short, their art is dead, and the commerce of modern civilisation has slain it.

A few years later, both the tone and the analysis have another emphasis:

> Look how the whole capitalist world is stretching out long arms towards the barbarous world and grabbing and clutching in eager competition at countries whose inhabitants don't want them; nay, in many cases would rather die in battle, like the valiant men they are, than have them. So perverse are these wild men before the blessings of civilisation which would reduce them to a propertyless proletariat. And what is all this for? . . . For the opening of fresh markets to take in all the fresh profit-producing wealth which is growing greater and greater every day.

John Mumion

Even as a young man, Morris — who was born wealthy and privileged, and worked for enjoyment and to satisfy his immense creative energy — was disturbed by the conditions of work imposed on the vast majority of men and women. He saw 'cheap and nasty' products flooding the shops, and jerry-built houses covering the fields, all representing toil undertaken from sheer necessity. 'This toil degrades them into less than men again', he declared. The sentence continues: 'and art only can do it, and redeem them from this slavery.' Slowly, he became aware that art could not act as an independent liberating force, but must be the expression of better social relationships. With painful honesty — painful because he loved art profoundly and had always assumed it to be the supreme value — he brought himself to write:

> It would be a shame to an honest artist to enjoy what he had huddled up to himself of such art, as it would be for a rich man to sit and eat dainty food amongst starving soldiers in a beleaguered fort. I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few or freedom for a few. No, rather than art should live this poor thin life, I would that the world should indeed sweep away all art for a while: rather that the earth had it, that it might yet have a chance to quicken in the dark.

Morris made no distinction between the words 'artist' and 'craftsman' — or, for that matter, 'worker'. The great gulf, to his mind, was between work as pleasure and work as toil; the great aim was a society in which all work would be pleasure (with the proviso that any work that couldn't yield pleasure would be done by 'immensely improved machinery'). In his Utopian novel, *News from Nowhere,* he expressed this with the air of common sense that was his most persuasive quality as a writer. Payment for work, he envisages, has been abolished, along with money as a medium of exchange. 'If you are going to ask to be paid for the pleasure of creation, which is what excellence in work means, the next thing we shall hear of will be a bill sent in for the begetting of children.' In a pamphlet entitled *Communism* (he also used the words 'Socialist' and 'Communist' interchangeably) he wrote:

> What amount of wealth we should produce if we are all working cheerfully at producing the things that we all genuinely want; if all the intelligence, all the inventive power, all the inherited skill of handicraft, all the keen wit and insight, all the healthy bodily strength were engaged in doing this and nothing else, what a pile of wealth we should have! How would poverty be a word whose meaning we should have forgotten! Believe me, there is nothing but the curse of inequality which forbids this.

This note of mingled — or, better said, fused — rationality and idealism also pervades his vision of human relationships. From the same pamphlet:

> That true society of loved and lover, parent and child, friend and friend, the society of well-wishers, of reasonable people conscious of the aspirations of humanity and of the duties we owe to it through one another . . . is held together and exists by its own inherent right and reason, in spite of what is usually thought to be the cement of society: arbitrary authority.



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## FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN LONDON

Local democracy in London is under attack by central government as never before. Parliament is being asked to approve three major pieces of legislation over the coming weeks and months:

## RATES BILL

This would have the effect of taking control of local services out of the hands of elected representatives. Instead, un-elected civil servants would have the power to tell local authorities (the borough councils, GLC and ILEA) how much they should be spending on the many and varied services which they provide.

"Rate-capping" may sound a good thing on the face of it. But do you really want to see a savage cut in essential services in London?

And does a Whitehall mandarin (who you cannot sack or even talk to) really know better than your local councillor what's best for your area?

## TRANSPORT BILL

This would take policy control of London Transport away from the GLC and give it to a new, non-elected board tightly controlled by government civil servants.

**At risk because of Government spending cuts are:**

- low fares – increases of up to 27% are on the cards
- bus routes – in effect 1 bus in 6 could be axed
- underground – 20 to 30 tube stations face possible closure
- old age pensioners' free travel will certainly be hit.

Are you one of the 90% of Londoners who want a say in fare levels and public transport policy?

## GLC ABOLITION

The first stage proposed by the government is the scrapping of the GLC elections due in May 1985.

This is an unprecedented move in Britain, except in wartime, and is an affront to democracy.

The second stage would be the abolition of the GLC from May 1986. Functions would be split between a nightmare array of joint boards, quangos and local boroughs. All would have strictly controlled budgets likely to result in big service cuts.

Are you one of the 84% of Londoners who don't support government plans to scrap the vote for who runs the capital. And do you want London to be deprived of its own, democratically elected voice?

## IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE ISSUES...

Next week the TUC, supported by many local authorities and community groups, are calling a Local Democracy Week. The programme in London is:

☐ **MONDAY (26 March)**
Transport Day. Travellers on buses and tubes will be told what routes and tube stations are at risk, and what may happen to OAPs' free travel passes.

☐ **MONDAY** ☐ **TUESDAY** ☐ **WEDNESDAY (26-28 March)**
GLC Open Days. Come to County Hall and discuss with the staff what the GLC does for you. Exhibitions, videos and slides, departments at work, creche by arrangement. For details phone Democracy for London Campaign (see below).

☐ **THURSDAY (29 March)**
Democracy Day. March and rally for local democracy, jobs and services. Assemble 11.30-12.00 noon, Malet Street/Gordon Square • 2.30pm, rally in Central Hall, Westminster • 3.30pm onwards, lobby of MPs • 4.00pm, delegation of Mayors to Downing Street with petitions and letters of protest.
Visit your local fire station in the morning.

## BOROUGH EVENTS

Many London boroughs (members of the Association of London Authorities) are also supporting Democracy Week. Some will be organising open days where you will be able to look round borough council facilities. Others will be organising or supporting events including processions, entertainments and football games. Council workers, residents and municipal vehicles all over London will be taking part in the Democracy Day march.

| NORTH LONDON | | SOUTH LONDON | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brent | 903 1400 | Greenwich | 854 8888 |
| Camden | 278 4444 | Lambeth | 274 7722 |
| Haringey | 888 3100 | Lewisham | 690 4343 |
| Hackney | 986 3123 | Southwark | 703 6311 |
| Islington | 226 3013 | | |

**EAST LONDON**
Barking and Dagenham 592 4500 Newham 472 1430

**SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| TUC | 636 4030 |
| Local Government Campaign Unit | 387 9893 |
| Democracy for London Campaign | 633 1248 |
| Association of London Authorities | 633 1557 |
| Capital (with transport unions) | 278 7801 |
| GLC Campaign Hotline | 633 4400 |

keep
**GLC**
**Working for London**



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Authority, or the stronger word 'tyranny', was always odious to Morris, and his development toward Socialism can also be seen as a realisation that it is inherent in the concept of property. In *News from Nowhere,* old Hammond (the character who carries the burden of exposition) tells us how it generated conflict and violence:

> Many violent acts came from the artificial perversions of the sexual passions, which caused overweening jealousy and the like miseries. Now, when you look carefully into these, you will find that what lay at the bottom of them was mostly the idea (a law-made idea) of the woman being the property of the man . . . That idea has of course vanished with private property, as well as certain follies about the 'ruin' of women for following their natural desires in an illegal way, which of course was a convention caused by the laws of private property.

Shocking stuff in 1891, and it's not surprising to find Morris writing to a friend: 'It is a ticklish subject, but one day or another we must face it'. He used the letter, with the caution that his views were 'not necessarily doctrine', to say things that he might not have said in a pamphlet:

> The present marriage system can only be kept up by the same means as the wages system is, i.e. the police and the army. When the wife can earn her living as a citizen . . . there will be nothing to force people into legal prostitution or tempt them into irregular venal ditto, which for the rest they couldn't have, as it is simply a form of ordinary market exploitation. Husband, wife and children would all be free.

Morris, whose own marriage was a youthful blunder and who uncomplainingly tolerated his wife's infidelity, set great value on friendship, honesty, and a conception of equal rights that ruled out the assertion of authority, be it in personal matters, or among comrades in the Socialist movement. This, almost as much as his outlook as an artist, sets a special stamp on the quality of his Socialism — for every Socialist is first a human being. Morris fully accepted, and indeed humbly studied, Marx's analysis of capitalist exploitation and class antagonisms; but the Socialism of Marx emerged from Hegelian philosophy and a mastery of economics, while the Socialism of Morris emerged from the love of beauty and a yearning for a world in which it might be the birthright of all. As E. P. Thompson, Morris's biographer, has recently put it: 'Morrisism is complementary to Marxism, it is not the same thing as Marxism, and Marxism has been diminished and weakened in its subsequent evolution by not paying enough respect to Morrisism'.

We are still casting about for valid forms of democratic Socialism, or self-management, or Socialism with a human face. Maybe what we have needed, and need now most urgently, is to regain the vision of William Morris. □

MEDIA

# Anatomy of a lie

**Elaine Potter tells the story of how Thames TV have handled a complaint about a programme broadcast in 1981**

IN THE wake of Thames Television's ignominious withdrawal of a libel action against the *Sunday Times* earlier this month, the paper issued an extraordinary statement. It read: 'Our concern was to demonstrate that a television programme was broadcast by Thames containing deliberate and in our view dangerous falsehoods which significantly worsened the plight of the dissidents inside Czechoslovakia. . .' It went on to say, as part of an agreed formula bashed out between Thames and the *Sunday Times:* 'We do however accept that Thames management did not knowingly put out a programme containing lies'. Thames also agreed to pay £60,000 towards the *Sunday Times*'s costs.

With such a humiliating compromise it seemed more than likely that, at the least, non-managerial heads would roll and Thames would move swiftly to revise procedures. It is, after all, a very serious matter if 'dangerous falsehoods' are broadcast by television companies, and management must be seen to act accordingly.

That, it seems, is not to be. Last week Roy Addison of Thames told the *New Statesman:* 'We have every faith in the programme that was transmitted. We would not accept that there was a lie'. But why then did they allow the *Sunday Times* such a tough and damaging re-statement of its charges?

The programme at issue was broadcast in June 1981 by Thames's documentary flagship, *TV Eye* and entitled 'The Last Round Up'. In a mixture of reporting and reconstruction, it described an attempt to smuggle banned literature into Czechoslovakia, the arrest of two French 'tourists' carrying the material into the country and the subsequent crackdown on several dissidents. Thames was helped in making the film by two London-based Czech exiles, Jan Kavan and Ivan Kyncl, whose father was one of the affected dissidents.

Immediately after the film was screened, Kavan and Kyncl lodged a complaint with the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC), alleging that dangerous and untrue statements had been injected into the film to make it more sensational. Of these, the most damaging was, they said, the film's assertion that the two French tourists who drove the van into Czechoslovakia carried with them the names and addresses of people inside Czechoslovakia. The implication of the distortion was that evidence had survived which provided the Czech authorities with material for their prosecution of dissidents.

The *Sunday Times* story when it appeared in November 1981, entitled 'TV Lie', asserted not only that the film had lied but that the falsehoods were maintained in submissions to the BCC. The paper backed up these allegations by interviewing two key witnesses. Both had been cited in evidence to the BCC by Thames to support the assertions of *TV Eye* reporter Julian Manyon that Kavan himself told him that such a list existed. Both witnesses denied that Kavan had told them of such a list.

It was clear from the submissions that the bulk of Thames's claims depended on the word of Manyon, whose integrity was under attack in the Kavan complaint to the BCC.

The *Sunday Times* article drew the libel action from Thames. Once Thames had initiated the libel action they moved to delay the BCC hearing of Kavan's complaint. They made a successful High Court application to get the BCC investigation postponed, arguing that it covered the same ground as the libel action and could prejudice it. Thus nothing happened in public until 5 March this year, the date set for the trial.

At about the same time, in January this year, the first attempt to arrive at a gentleman's agreement was made. Alistair Burnett, presenter of *TV Eye* and a powerful figure in television, made a private and informal approach to Sir Edward Pickering, the deputy chairman at Times Newspapers. Burnett took the view that it would be unseemly for two media organisations to be seen scrapping in public and urged a settlement.

Thames was looking for an apology from the *Sunday Times* and both sides to pay their own costs in exchange for their withdrawing their action. This proposal was passed on by Pickering to his staff. It met with steely resistance: an apology was out of the question.

In late February, Thames made a second move for a quiet solution. This time Thames's managing director Bryan Cowgill met Pickering at *The Times* -- again out of earshot of and without the knowledge of *Sunday Times* staff.

With the mass of evidence the paper had put together under the firm direction of its leading counsel, John Wilmers QC — a formidable courtroom inquisitor -- it was expected that Manyon would be in the witness box for at least five days. After a lengthy session with Manyon, Thames's counsel, Lord Rawlinson, advised that he thought they stood not much more than a 30 per cent chance of victory.

By mid-March, negotiations for a withdrawal of the action were well under way. The formula by which management were exempted from 'knowingly broadcasting a lie' became known by the participants as the 'life raft'; at issue during the fierce battles for an agreed settlement was exactly who would be found space on it. In the end everyone involved in the making of the film, including the editor of *TV Eye,* Michael Townson, was classed as management — everyone that is, except Manyon.

So would Manyon now be fired? 'Absolutely not' said the Thames spokesman, who declared that the company was fully behind the man they left off the raft. Furthermore, instead of conceding what has already been conceded, Thames would confidently launch a full-scale



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defence before the BCC inquiry, now to be resumed.

SO WE COME back to the question of why did Thames agree to the humbling settlement. Here Thames hide behind the fact of the BCC hearing to say they cannot comment, but 'off the record' they pointed the *New Statesman* in the direction of an item in the *Guardian* diary, which appeared the day after the settlement was announced.

According to this story, Norman Fenton, who as a *TV Eye* producer worked on the fateful programme in its early stages, should have been able to give crucial evidence on behalf of Thames. The *Guardian* quoted Thames's lawyers as saying that Fenton had given them a 'detailed, documented, two-hour statement' backing the central allegation of a 'list' of Czech dissidents. However, the diary story continued, in January, Fenton, who was at that time in the thick of a dispute with the company over his expenses, 'abruptly changed his tune' and wrote to Thames saying that his earlier statement contained some inaccuracies.

On that basis, Thames was quoted as saying, the company felt he would be an 'unreliable witness' and dropped him; this, it was implied, was crucial to the collapse of its case.

Fenton's own story is dramatically different. He says that after he heard the story of the arrests at the Czech border, he had three meetings with Kavan and Kyncl, some of which were attended by Manyon. Then he was sent off on a foreign assignment and was never involved with the Kavan story again.

When Thames decided to sue the paper for libel, Fenton was asked to meet the lawyers who were looking for independent corroborative evidence, as the only eye-witness statements came from Townson, the programme's editor and Manyon, both of whom were plaintiffs in the libel action.

Fenton agreed, met them and shortly after received a two page note of the discussion. He barely read the note before filing it away unsigned. The first time he took any notice of the case was in January this year when Thames's lawyer sent him a copy of their barrister's advice on the merits of the case. He realised for the first time that he was expected to play a vital role as a corroborative witness.

Fenton dug out the note and found at least four errors. 'Loyalty, yes, perjury, no' is how Fenton summed up his position, but as he was involved in an industrial dispute with the company he approached his union's legal advisers for assistance. The solicitor dictated a letter for Fenton, which Fenton signed and duly sent to Thames, saying that there were some inaccuracies which he could not testify to and expected to be asked to clarity what testimony could be agreed. He never got an answer.

So, far from Fenton backing off from a 'detailed, documented, two hour statement' there was only ever a draft note which remained unsigned and was never discussed with him by anyone. Nor for that matter did any executive connected with the programme ever try to discuss the case with him, though he has been cast in the role of being a crucial witness.

No date for a hearing by the BCC has yet been set. But the story has become a vital test of whether television companies are accountable for the material they broadcast. □

PUBLIC SPENDING

# Ministerial melodramas

## David Blake on the Treasury's retreat from hysteria

AFTER THE SEVERE mauling that the Treasury's secret internal studies on trends in public spending and taxes got when they were leaked in 1982, the Green Paper on the same subject (published last week with the Budget) is a model of intellectual honesty and concern for the facts. These are:

1. That if the economy grows at anything like an acceptable rate, we can either have a reasonable growth in spending and no tax rises; or a virtual standstill in spending and big tax cuts. The nightmare scenarios which the previous Chancellor used to try to force through big spending cuts have vanished like mists from the government's thinking. Sir Geoffrey Howe warned the Cabinet in 1982 that unchanged spending policies could force him to raise the standard rate of income tax up by 15p in the pound, or to double the rate of VAT. All that has now been dropped. As the table shows, even if public spending rises by 1 per cent a year in real terms, on any reasonable economic assumption there would be room for big tax cuts by the end of the decade, instead of pressure for tax rises. If public spending is held static in real terms, the Chancellor expects to have £10,000m to give away by the end of this Parliament. This makes nonsense of Sir Geoffrey Howe's warning that he would have to increase taxes by £15,000m. Where does this magic £25,000m turnaround come from?

Part of it comes from more optimistic/realistic assessments about likely growth. Sir Geoffrey Howe in 1982 tried to focus Cabinet attention on what would happen if the economy only grew by ½ per cent a year; Mr Lawson assumes that it will grow at least three times as fast, and might even make 2 per cent a year. This is not breakneck speed, but it is respectable by recent performance. As the Green Paper now concedes, public spending could grow by 2 per cent a year and borrowing could still be cut and the tax burden could still be brought down from its current level of 38½ per cent of domestic output. The 'fiscal crisis' of Sir Geoffrey's paper and the associated Think Tank report has in short been demolished by the government's own publication.

2. The pressures leading to an automatic rise in spending are nothing like as severe as the Treasury made out in 1982. At that stage it was fashionable to say that demographic and other pressures would themselves force spending up by about 1½ per cent a year, unless radical steps were taken. This was given as the justification for some of the more far-reaching cuts proposed by the Think Tank.

The new Green Paper is much less specific than the 1982 document, which contained page after page of often specious detail about the way spending was likely to develop over the next ten years. For example, in 1982 the Treasury assumed that defence spending would rise by nearly 40 per cent between 1982 and 1990. In its latest version, it simply says that the world is a dangerous place and that there are bound to be pressures for more defence spending.

The retreat from claims that huge increases in spending are inevitable goes much further than defence. Housing was blamed in 1982 for £2800m increased public spending between 1982 and 1990; it is not mentioned at all this time, something which may be explained by the scorn which was poured on the government's figures when they were leaked.

Other factors which have had vague walk-on parts in past Ministerial melodramas about public spending have been cut down to size in the Green Paper. For example, the demographic pressures of a country growing old and needing to support more pensioners. As the Green Paper says, the total number of pensioners will rise by only about 600,000, or 6 per cent, by the early 1990s. That will involve little more than a third as many people as were taken out of the producing sector of the economy by the rise in unemployment between 1979 and 1983.

For the past 18 months, since the Treasury's internal papers started to leak, the debate about long-term spending has been caught up in a completely pointless argument about how fast spending would grow and the extent to which this would cause a fiscal crisis. The great virtue of the Green Paper is that we have evidence that the government has abandoned the 'crisis' argument for cutting spending. Instead, we can argue about just how our society wants to spend its extra wealth — whether through more private consumption financed by tax cuts or more public spending on collective goods.

It is a pity that it has taken this long to get back to that starting point, but let us be thankful that we are back there at last. □

*David Blake is Home Editor of* The Times.

**Public Sector Expenditure, Receipts and Borrowing, 1983-84 to 1993-94**

*Per cent of GDP at market prices*

| | 1983-84 est. | 1984-85 | 1988-89 | 1993-94 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Public expenditure* planning total** | 39¾ | 38½ | 35½ | 34½ |
| **2. Net debt interest** | 3½ | 3¼ | 2½ | 1¾ |
| **3. North Sea revenues** | 3 | 3 | 2¼ | 1½ |
| **4. Non-North Sea taxes*** | 36 | 35¾ | 33½ | 33¼ |
| **5. Other net receipts** | 1 | ¾ | ½ | ½ |
| **6. PSBR (1 + 2-3-4-5)** | 3¼ | 2¼ | 1¾ | 1 |

**Assumes that GDP grows at 1½ per cent a year between 1988-89 and 1983-94 and public expenditure at 1 per cent.*



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# DIARY

## John Pilger

It is not difficult to observe the everyday symptoms of post-imperial menopause in Britain, specifically the results of cynical administration, Tory and Labour. Returning from Australia, I was struck again by the enforced shabbiness of lives and places and the political betrayal of the best of this society, such as a sense of community and a common decency. One event on Budget Day served to bring this home to me. While Nigel Lawson was droning his 'clever' and 'inspired' budget in the House of Commons, I watched an eviction.

Three families, including nine children, were evicted into the street by bouncers from a so-called hostel in Tower Hamlets, which accommodates unemployed and homeless people in the manner of a modern workhouse. It is called Princes Lodge and is owned by Namecourt Limited which, in common with many squalid places like it, is able to make an easy, fat bundle from rents paid by Social Security. As dusk gathered, plastic sacks of clothing and a fridge and a birdcage and a telly and a large teddy bear were piled on the pavement. Motorists gaped and passers-by shrugged and passed by. A police Panda car stopped and the occupants looked and did nothing; mustn't get involved in *that* one, sunshine. It was all so disgraceful it was surreal; the bouncers laughed and the evicted kids were red-eyed and grey from the cold as a wind laden with dirt and litter sluiced Commercial Road. The Greater London Council has undertaken to get homes for the families. Indeed, the GLC virtually keeps alive 150 voluntary organisations which help the increasing number of homeless, especially those single and unprotected by the Homeless Persons Act; and this government, which has more than halved spending on housing, intends to abolish the GLC. When and if that happens, watch for a small nation within the nation living rough, like they do in Calcutta.

○

The film director Costa Gavras was in London last week talking about his work, which has ranged from *Z* about his native Greece under the colonels, to *The Confession* about the show trials in Prague in the 1950s to *Missing,* set in Chile and perhaps the first Hollywood movie to be political, truthful, to have a love story other than the standard gratuitous schmalz and to be a commercial success. What I most admire about Costa Gavras, apart from his humility, is his steadfast refusal to accept the usual, mindless tag which is attached to those who have the effrontery to try to be both radical and original. In France, where he lives, he has been denounced, unsuccessfully, as a communist *and* a right-winger. '*The Confession* caused an extraordinarily violent reaction,' he told me, 'not only from communists but socialists, too. To them, I was a lackey of the Right. Then five years later the movie was shown on television and a leading figure in the Communist Party said that this was the kind of important movie the Party should *encourage.* The line had changed! The truth, of course, had remained the same.'

○

When I, an inveterate swimmer, first came to Britain I marvelled at the number of good swimming pools almost everywhere. The 'baths', I soon learned, had been installed with courthouses, town halls, prisons and other slabs of Victoriana and were places where people not only swam, but also washed (clothes as well as themselves). For the benefit of fellow lappers, my youngster and I are compiling a good pool guide. For style, we recommend the City University pool where the 1908 Olympic events were held and which, according to a plaque, 'has been refurbished through the generosity of the Worshipful Company of Saddlers'. For serious lappers, there is the no-frills and often empty Ironmonger down the road; and for the kids, we suggest the magnificent Elephant and Castle and Latchmere 'leisure centres', with wave machines and inflatables and ingenious lighting just like sunshine — well, almost like sunshine.

○

The police are now preventing people moving lawfully about Britain. Parliament made secondary picketing subject to the civil law, not the criminal code; but the police have applied the latter to stop miners leaving Kent and Yorkshire. A book published recently, which hasn't received the publicity it deserves, is *Political Trials in Britain** by that tireless campaigner for civil rights, Peter Hain. There are not *meant* to be political trials in Britain, but of course there are, and Hain documents them with great care. Nor are the police *meant* to be political, but of course they are and increasingly so; and Hain reminds us about the little-known 'codes of practice' which go with the 1980 Employment Act and which are almost as important as the Act itself. The code on picketing, he explains, 'gives enormous discretion to police officers on the spot'. It is phrased in such a way that, as one labour lawyer put it, 'it is unclear where the law stops and opinion begins . . . opinion masquerades as law'. It is not difficult to understand why so much publicly declared reverence for the 'rule of law' these days is bogus. The law is on your side only if you are 'on side'.

○

Every Saturday morning I can be found on the north side of Clapham Common punishing my larynx. It is really a large traffic island with grass; never mind; it is the home of the mighty Clapham Little League. Unlike almost all other football, school football and junior league included, no player is ever rejected outright or discouraged. Aged between 9 and 12, they all get a game and those who substitute at half-time are usually the young and shy ones, the learners. There was one black lad who used to appear at training in an overcoat and would not take it off until it was discovered he had no kit; and the Little League saw to that. Everything is provided, everyone is a volunteer; and it all flows from that sense of community I mentioned at the beginning. Last year I wrote to a dozen famous London clubs asking them to sponsor a Little League team, which meant £20 a year and the use of their name. A few wrote back and said no; most did not bother to reply. No doubt there are many complex reasons why big football's crowds are vanishing. One of them must be the little care given to the roots of the game: the kids.

*Allen Lane £12.95

# ROGER WODDIS

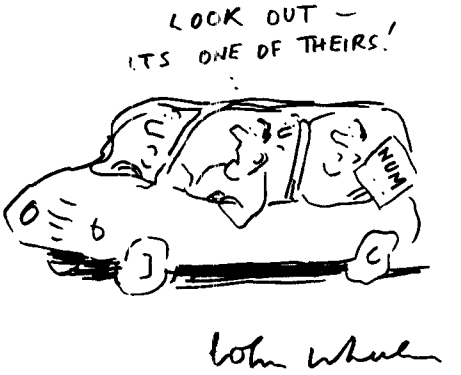
## Thick blue lines

*'Those people who want to go to work must be allowed the right to do so.' — David Hall, Chief Constable of Humberside, who is in charge of the police operation against miners' pickets*

It was crisis day in the coalfields,
The police were out in force
To ensure the nation's business
Pursued its normal course.
And as the miners mustered,
There came from David Hall
A heartfelt sob: 'A steady job
Is guaranteed to all!'

His words struck home to millions
Who hadn't worked for years;
They blessed his name in the dole queues
And they brushed away their tears.
'Hooray! Hooray!' cried the media,
'Expression must be free,
So let's condemn the NUM
And praise the NCB!'

They backed in every broadcast
And every printed page
The right of every worker
To earn a living wage.
And every union member
Stopped carrying a card,
And overjoyed, the unemployed
Gave thanks to Scotland Yard.



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# Not to mention Taiwan

**Ronald Reagan visits the Great Wall next month — Jonathan Mirsky looks at why Peking is backing the right winger in the US presidential election campaign**

THE CHINESE are preparing to do next month what they did in March 1972 for Richard Nixon; what they can to help a reactionary Republican into a second term in the White House. It costs Peking little and China stands to get a lot.

In Nixon's case, what they got was an end to international isolation, a seat in the UN, eventual diplomatic recognition by the US and American agreement that somehow or other (this is still unresolved) Taiwan is to be treated as an internal Chinese issue. From Reagan, Peking will get modernising technology, continued enmity to the Soviet Union (China will be friendly to almost anyone who hates the Russians) and a bit more climb-down on US support for Taiwan.

When Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang left the US in January in a cloud of bilateral euphoria, it was only eight months since Peking had cancelled cultural and sporting exchanges with the Americans and was threatening that worse could follow. But in mid-1983 neither Peking nor Washington had wanted a serious break. New understandings were being born. In the months before Mr Zhao finally landed in Washington, the Americans abandoned hope that the Peoples Republic might become their well-armed hitman on the Soviet eastern flank. China, for its part, began slowly tuning down its public rage over Mr Reagan's continued support for Taiwan ('our friends the government on Taiwan' as he put it), in exchange for American help with Deng Xiaoping's modernisation programme.

Nonetheless, in the early spring of 1983 Peking was furious at what it took to be American backsliding over the 17 August 1982 joint communiqué in which Washington undertook to limit and eventually phase out its arms sales to Taiwan. Relations which had cooled as soon as Reagan entered the Oval office began to freeze when China's woman tennis champion defected in California, the Americans increased cotton import restrictions and an arcane legal wrangle broke out over millions of dollars worth of 70 year-old imperial Chinese railway bonds.

The Chinese insisted throughout the deepening freeze that the real issue was Taiwan. And, indeed, the near break, when it finally occurred in April last year, came because Hu Na, the defecting tennis star, had placed her case for asylum in the hands of lawyers linked to Taiwan. When Secretary of State George Shultz arrived in Peking in February last year, heart-rending letters from Hu Na's parents were placed in his lap. Soon thereafter, however, President Reagan granted her asylum and publicly declared that he would be willing to adopt her if necessary. That did it. Peking promptly snapped all cultural and sporting arrangements with the Americans; Chinese white-water canoeists did not compete in the American northwest that summer.

But even then the loudest alarm bells did not ring in Peking and Washington. Although Deng Xiaoping and his comrades may have smarted each time that Reagan referred to 'our friends on Taiwan' they are above all dedicated to modernising mainland China.

That is why the Hu Na incident, while the most prominent issue of the Shultz visit to Peking, was not the most important. As his Secretary of State was taking off for Peking, Reagan had instructed him to 'look Deng right in the eye and tell him we want to be his friend'. When Shultz delivered this message, it is reported, Deng drew himself to his full five feet and asked, 'Then why do you treat us like the Russians when we try to buy your technology?'

Deng had in his mind Jimmy Carter's promise to him in Washington in late 1979: China could have the latest advanced electronics, including computers and know-how. But the Pentagon blocked delivery on the grounds that the technology could have military application and that in such matters the Chinese were always treated like the Russians.

DENG'S OUTRAGE impressed Shultz. He returned to Washington convinced that despite elevated language accusing both the US and the USSR of 'hegemonism', in fact Deng and his colleagues regarded the Russians as the major threat to world peace and to China in particular. But Shultz, unlike Jimmy Carter and his advisers like Defense Secretary Harold Brown and White House confidant Zbigniew Brzezinski, did not wish to play Peking as a military card against Moscow.

Shultz understood, despite his rough ride in China, that the Chinese could never develop an

Camera Press

**Richard Nixon visits the Great Wall to boost his chances in the 1972 presidential election campaign — why are the Chinese willing to do the same for Reagan this year?**



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army modern enough really to damage the Russians. What the Chinese wanted was an up-to-date economy. Nor did Peking wish to appear like Washington's running dog, but as a major Third World centre of inspiration.

In a little-appreciated speech on 5 March 1983, Mr Shultz, avoiding terms like 'strategic ally', placed China in an Asian context — as a large developing nation deserving help from the US in helping keep peace in the region. To display Washington's new view of China's real needs, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige was sent to Peking, where he pledged that all requests for advanced technology would be expedited. Premier Zhao's delighted response was a declaration that the matter of tennis star Hu Na was now closed.

More squalls over Taiwan surrounded Defense Secretary Weinberger's Peking visit last September. But the trip turned out to be less than a triumphant success because Weinberger's offer of arms sales was decidedly unspecific. The Chinese contrasted this with then-Secretary of State Haig's grandiose promises in 1981, which were thought in Peking to be a ploy designed to mute China's outrage over increased arms sales to Taiwan.

By the end of 1983, however, on the eve of Premier Zhao's arrival in Washington, the Sino-US relationship had substantially returned to where it had been before Reagan's inauguration. The President had stopped mentioning the 'government' in Taipei and Peking had taken to referring to the Taiwan-American relationship as one 'rooted in history' (a special Chinese category for deferred international problems), which need not block progress in other areas.

In January, the stage was set for mutual acclaim. Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski did their bit by supplying China's leading international journal, *Beijing Review*, with unprecedented copy, welcoming the Zhao visit. Unlike Deng Xiaoping's curious circus-like tour in 1979, which featured him in ten-gallon hats and watching the Harlem Globetrotters play basketball, the Zhao progress round American made him look and sound statesmanlike.

He signed two unglamorous but highly symbolic technological and commercial agreements. China will get its computers and its youth will learn to use them at MIT and Cal Tech. Zhao had promised before taking off from Peking not to harass the President about Taiwan; when he did mention the place he wrapped it in a blanket of compliments.

The Chinese are settling for a slow diminuendo in US support for Taiwan. They hope, too, that from now on when their young people defect — which is already happening — the Americans will be adroit enough to allow them to disappear into the Chinese communities in New York and San Francisco and avoid public statements about evidence of Chinese seeking 'freedom'.

In return for the technology and a bit of restraint over Taiwan, the Chinese will hand Reagan a gigantic welcome when he arrives in April. Richard Nixon's China-opening did him no harm in his 1972 re-election. After Beirut, Ronald Reagan is in need of a foreign policy triumph, and the Chinese will do what they can for him: they will at least see to it that he looks good on the Great Wall. □

ISRAEL

# 'Thinning out'

## PLO defeats have not quelled Gaza. Deborah Pugh reports

THE ISRAELI invasion of Lebanon succeeded in shattering the PLO infrastructure in the Middle East. Yet, to the surprise of the Israeli authorities, this did not automatically mean that other occupied territories — the Gaza Strip and the West Bank — accepted military rule.

Ola L. Andresen

**The Beach Camp, Gaza: refugees' houses bulldozed by Israeli army, June 1983**

Rather, according to Israeli statistics gathered during the following year, there was an upsurge of strikes, demonstrations and stone-throwing incidents. The latter particularly enrages Israeli settlers as they have to travel on roads running through the camps to reach their own settlements and are an easy target for young stone throwers. The continuing strong local resistance to the Israelis put paid to their theory that hostility was due to incitement by the PLO. The Israeli response has been to try to control the camps where some 300,000 Palestinians live.

Israeli policy in the West Bank now looks as if it will be similar to that which already applies in the Gaza Strip. The policy is commonly known as 'thinning out' the camps. In November the Israelis announced a 'refugee resettlement programme' for the Gaza Strip, costing $1.5m to house 30,000 refugee families over five or six years. Even if money is forthcoming from American aid, as is hoped by the Israelis, it is doubtful whether they will really donate such a sum to rehousing. More cynical observers believe that plans for the West Bank will follow the same pattern as the Gaza Strip — bulldozing houses to 'thin out' the camps and leaving refugees homeless or displaced to other temporary camps.

'Thinning out' the camps, was first used in the early '70s by General Ariel Sharon, who tried to quell a virtual uprising in the Gaza camps by bulldozing houses to create roads wide enough for army vehicles to patrol them. The 500 displaced families were shunted into a deserted army camp just over the Egyptian border. They are still there now — despite pleading to return since the Camp David accords separated them from their familes and jobs on the Gaza Strip. Since 1975, nearly 9,000 refugees have been resettled in eight housing projects in the Gaza Strip. Only last July, Israeli Army bulldozers destroyed over 20 houses on the edge of Beach Camp, leaving 300 homeless with only strips of corrugated iron or canvas to protect them from the scorching sun. The families were forced to fetch water from long distances after rubble was shoved over the camp's water mains.

THE REASON given by the Israeli Army was that the houses were built without permits and that they were simply enforcing the law. As the refugees explained it, the military authorities control the issuing of all building permits for the entire Gaza Strip and refuse to allow even the construction of extensions except in the eight housing projects they have established.

Yet according to employees of UNWRA, the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees, which is responsible for the welfare of the refugees, the majority of the homes destroyed last summer were not illegally built. Indeed, some residents had building permits issued by UNWRA before the Israeli occupation — Israel no longer allows UNWRA to control building inside the camps. Both residents and UNWRA employees believe that the houses were destroyed as part of the general policy to 'thin out' the camps.

The Israeli government insists that 'rehousing' in the Gaza Strip will be entirely voluntary and done for humanitarian reasons. But residents of Dheisheh Camp near Bethlehem, for example, say that they are doubtful and that they see it as part of a pattern of general harassment, which has involved arrests, night raids, curfews lasting weeks, heavy fines, confiscation of books, sealing off the main street with reinforced concrete, closure of shops bordering the inter-city roads and closure of schools for months.

They think that they will be shunted to areas not wanted by Isreali settlers. But they also believe that the 'thinning' out' is a continuation of the policy of creating wide roads in the camps for army patrols, to make Israeli control easier. Given the increasing hostility on both sides, it is unlikely that the rehousing will take place without violent confrontation. □



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BRAZIL

# The $62 billion questioned

**The Amazon forest and its people are being invaded by EEC-backed developers, reports Catherine Caufield**

THE GRANDE Carajas Programme (GCP) extends over an area of eastern Amazonia the size of France and Great Britain combined. Among the developments under way or planned are the world's biggest iron-ore mine and others for gold, copper, manganese, nickel and tin; the fourth-largest dam in the world; a 900 km-long electric railway; a deep-water port, several aluminium smelters, 25,000 square km of plantations, vast cattle ranches, and 10 new cities. The whole scheme will cost $62 billion.

The area chosen covers one of the world's last remaining large tracts of unspoilt tropical rain forest, where more than 12,000 Indians live. Along with hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers scattered throughout the 800,000 square km region, the Indians are being hounded off their lands by encroaching industrial and agribusiness developments and by hired gunmen working for land speculators.

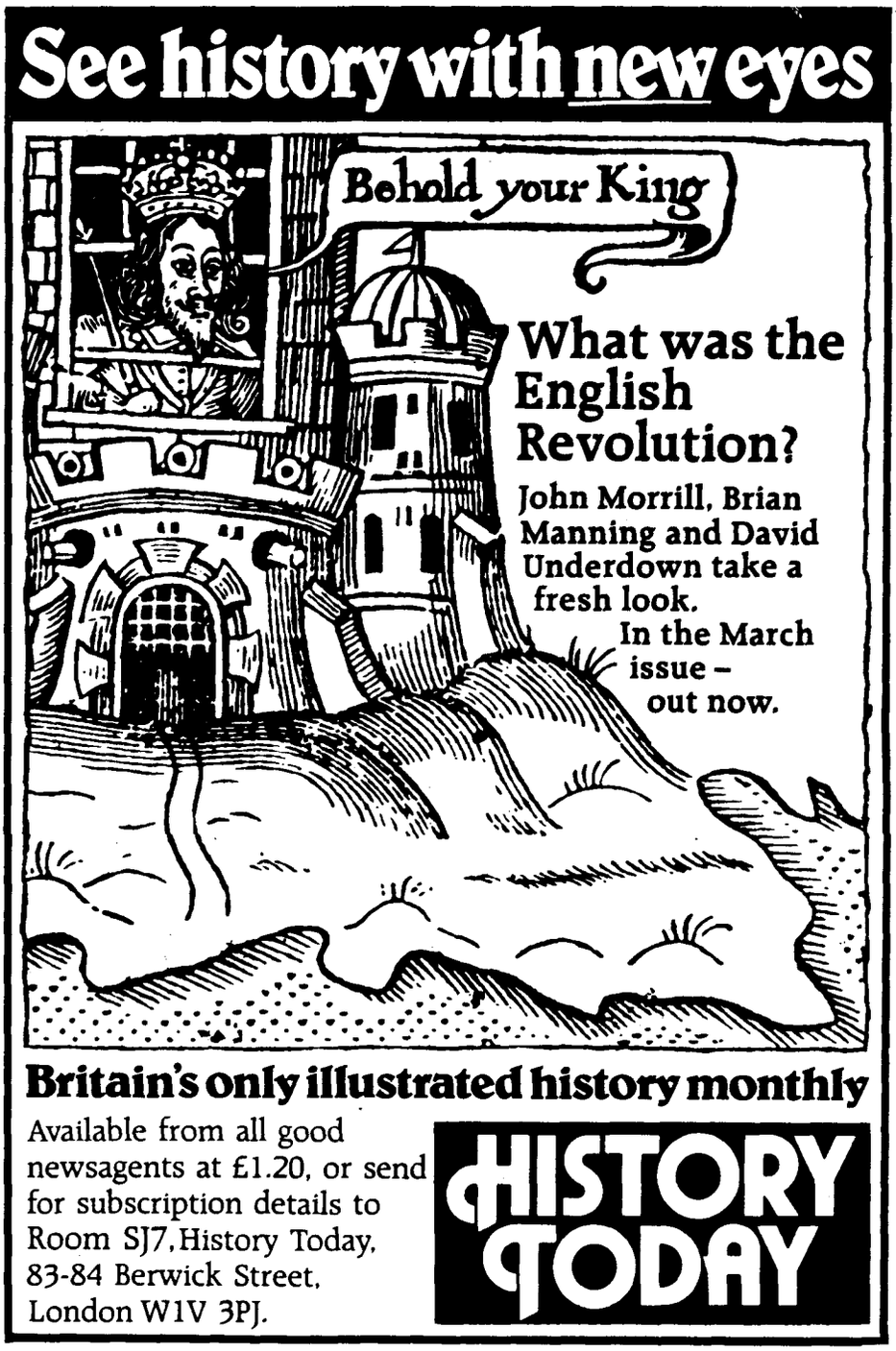
Although there are more than 20 Indian reserves in the region, the state mining company, CVRD, acknowledges only the 'possibility' of Indian nations within the GCP area. Another CVRD official recently denied that anyone lived in the area, calling it 'a desert'. One Indian group living there is the Parakanan, whose two reserves will be flooded by the reservoir of the Tucurui hydroelectric dam. Their numbers reduced by disease, dislocation, and violence from 1,000 earlier this century to fewer than 100 today, the Parakanan have been moved several times during their long wait for resettlement. At last they have been allowed to choose a new reserve, but it is full of squatters and the government has not kept its promise to give it official protection.

Using EEC funds, CVRD is routing an electric railway through the reserve of another tribe, the Gavoies. As many as 12 trains, each with 160 freight cars, will travel 12 miles through the reserve every day for the next 80 years. Track maintenance will require the building of access roads, workers' camps, and sand and gravel pits, causing disruption and pollution. The government recently upheld CVRD's claim that re-routing the track would be too expensive and that the Gavioes, who 20 years ago were on the verge of extinction, are now so used to life in industrial society that they will not be disturbed by the trains.

On the island of Sao Luis, the State Development Corporation cleared 20,000 people off their land for the building of the railway terminal and port. Many left with no more than the clothes on their backs and what little they could carry; a few received a derisory sum in compensation, amounting, in the words of one commentator, to the cost of one night in a three-star hotel. Last June the police bulldozed the shacks of hundreds of families who had erected a shanty town on the outskirts of the city of Sao Luis after Alumar (a consortium of Shell and the US multi-national Alcoa) had taken their farmland. The authorities have offered them a site near a leprosy sanatorium.

Although the World Bank has insisted on certain ecological safeguards for the iron-ore mine itself, the environmental effects of the scheme as a whole are likely to be disastrous. The Tucurui dam, which will supply power for the railway and the aluminium smelters, is to flood 2,000 square km of virgin forest. On the advice of ecologists, the state power company, Electronorte, originally intended to clear the forest and sell the timber, which is worth many millions of dollars.

But the job was never done because the contract went to the military pension fund, an organisation with no forestry experience. So when the reservoir fills, the trees will decay and release acidic nutrients into the water, making it an ideal habitat for waterweeds that clog up the turbines. Several other dams in Brazil have already had to undergo multi-million dollar repairs from waterweed damage and corrosion by acidic waters. A report by a World Bank ecologist concluded that decaying trees would also make Tucurui a breeding ground for malarial mosquitoes and the snails that cause the debilitating tropical liver disease, bilharzia.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The purpose of the scheme is to produce goods for export in order to earn foreign exchange to pay Brazil's $90 billion foreign debt. But even the financial basis of the scheme is questionable. At least a third of Brazil's debt has been run up by public companies borrowing to finance spectacular projects such as the costly and controversial nuclear programme. The Carajas programme will dwarf anything so far attempted in Brazil, in terms of cost and risk.

The backbone of the programme is the iron ore mine. The European Community is financing one third of the $1.8 billion cost. According to community official Robert Verrue, the investment is 'tightly tied to the interests of the European steel industry. Companies in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Luxembourg have signed long-term contracts with CVRD for secure deliveries of iron ore supplies at favourable prices'. In fact CVRD has already sold 27 of the 35 million tons of high-grade ore for what a Brazilian opposition politician called 'banana prices'. The mine is now projected by some economists to run at a loss for ten years or more, and will need more expensive foreign loans to keep going.

In order to obtain international finance for the iron ore and bauxite projects, Brazil agreed to give foreign investors big tax concessions, generous import quotas, electricity at an average 30 per cent discount, and to provide modern infrastructure, including the railway and deep water port. These inducements, along with extremely lax pollution controls and cheap labour have attracted Japanese, European and American investors. One such is an aluminium refinery and smelter that will process bauxite from a Canadian mine and from one owned by Rio Tinto-Zinc; it will consume, at a discount, up to five per cent of Brazil's electricity supply by the end of the century. Unlike the foreign multinationals, however, Brazilian consumers will pay the full price for electricity.

Proponents of Tucurui (and the other eight large and 19 smaller dams built to exploit the immense water flow of the Amazon Basin's rivers) argue that hydroelectricity will reduce Brazil's annual $9 billion oil import bill. Tucurui alone could provide electricity equivalent to 400,000 barrels a day, a notional savings on oil of $12 million a day. But Brazil already has nearly a 25 per cent surplus of generating capacity. Paying interest on the borrowing to build these huge dams ($7.5 billion for Tucurui alone) will offset much of the projected savings. In any case, most of Tucurui's production will not go to replace electricity produced by imported oil for the heavily-populated south. It will be largely supplying, at a discount, new industrial customers in the north.

Environmentalists, human rights groups and development agencies have urged the European Community to suspend all loan payments to Brazil pending detailed studies of the effects of the Grande Carajas programme on local people and on the ecology and economy of the Amazon. The Commission, however, insists that: 'the concern expressed in this connection is not justified. . .the developer has laid particular emphasis on environmental protection and the human implications of the project'. □

INDIA

# The snow leopard

## Barbara Keen on the scarcity value of illicit furs

*Kashmir*

THE RED DATA Book lists and grades the endangered animals of the world. Among the Asian species, the snow leopard is listed as 'severely endangered'.

Sightings of this handsome and elusive cat are extremely rare in its native Himalayas. But they are easy enough to find in Srinagar, capital of Kashmir. Unfortunately, they are all on coat-hangers.

Yet in India the snow leopard — and about 60 other species — are supposed to have total protection. State and national legislation prohibits the hunting or selling of 'Schedule A' animals. Every stage of the process is apparently covered — you may not hunt or trap the snow leopard, you may not sell the pelt or goods made from it, you may not take such products out of the country, and international agreements prevent the import of endangered animal products into many countries.

The visitor is left in no doubt about the official line. There are two large notices at the Srinagar Tourist Reception Centre warning of the perils of purchasing protected animals products — arrest, fines, confiscation, even imprisonment.

Posing as a prospective buyer, I stroked the thick cream and grey coats. 'Yes, they are beautiful,' I said to the furrier, 'but surely I'd be stopped at the airport by an eagle-eyed customs man?'

'Oh madam, no one will trouble you at the airport.'

'But the notice at Tourist Reception?'

'I am giving you a document.'

'You can't give a document for a prohibited export!'

'Oh yes,' he said calmly, flicking open a large book and showing all the receipts given to other buyers. 'Besides, you are a foreign tourist, you can export personal goods.'

'Won't the customs people confiscate it?' Great mirth throughout the shop.

'The customs men don't confiscate anything, madam, but if you are worried, I will do one thing. I will post the coat to you.'

'But surely the postal authorities . . .' More gales of laughter. Then a sheaf of correspondence was produced — thanks for goods received and further orders. The letters were from all over the world, ordering a range of furs, though the snow leopard is a runaway best seller with Germans and Japanese, according to several furriers. The trade in endangered skins was obviously healthy in Kashmir, in spite of an overall decline in their fur trade.

A SNOW LEOPARD coat costs betwen £2,000 and £3,500. There are many dodges. One furrier had a rack of coats made from various 'Schedule A' animals — snow leopard, clouded leopard, lynx, even a tiger coat, looking like an up-market camouflage jacket, which I suppose it is, in its natural state.

The furrier insisted that he had had the coats since the '60s, well before the current protective legislation was passed. Yet they seemed very shiny and new. He had been trying to persuade the authorities to compensate him for his theoretically unsaleable stock, but, in the meantime, he would be delighted to sell one or two from the banned rack, and for me to drum up a bit of mail-order business when I got home.

You might have thought that a state government serious about stopping the trade in endangered skins would have taken existing stock from local traders at the time the legislation was passed, so there could be no question of 'old stock' on the racks almost ten years later.

Pursuing my investigations, I went down-market to a tatty little shop with a heap of small spotted skins on the floor. I was assured in hushed tones that they were baby snow leopard. They weren't, but it must have seemed worth a try to jump on the bandwagon.

Earlier in the day, in a posh shop along the boulevard, I had seen a dozen adult pelts ready for making up, a rack of exotic coats, made mainly from protected animals, waiting for lining and adjusting to the buyer's specifications, and two more, lined and finished, to be collected by their new Japanese owners.

The factors in the snow leopard trade fit together with a neat and terrible finality. Total protection on the books, less than rigorously enforced, means high prices for everyone in the chain — hunter, middleman and furrier: for the foreign buyer, an envy-creating bargain to be flaunted or sold at great profit. But the real price is being paid by the snow leopard, the last of whom may soon be found on a coat-hanger in Srinagar. □

Kenneth Fink/Ardea

**The snow leopard: a 'severely endangered' species of cat**



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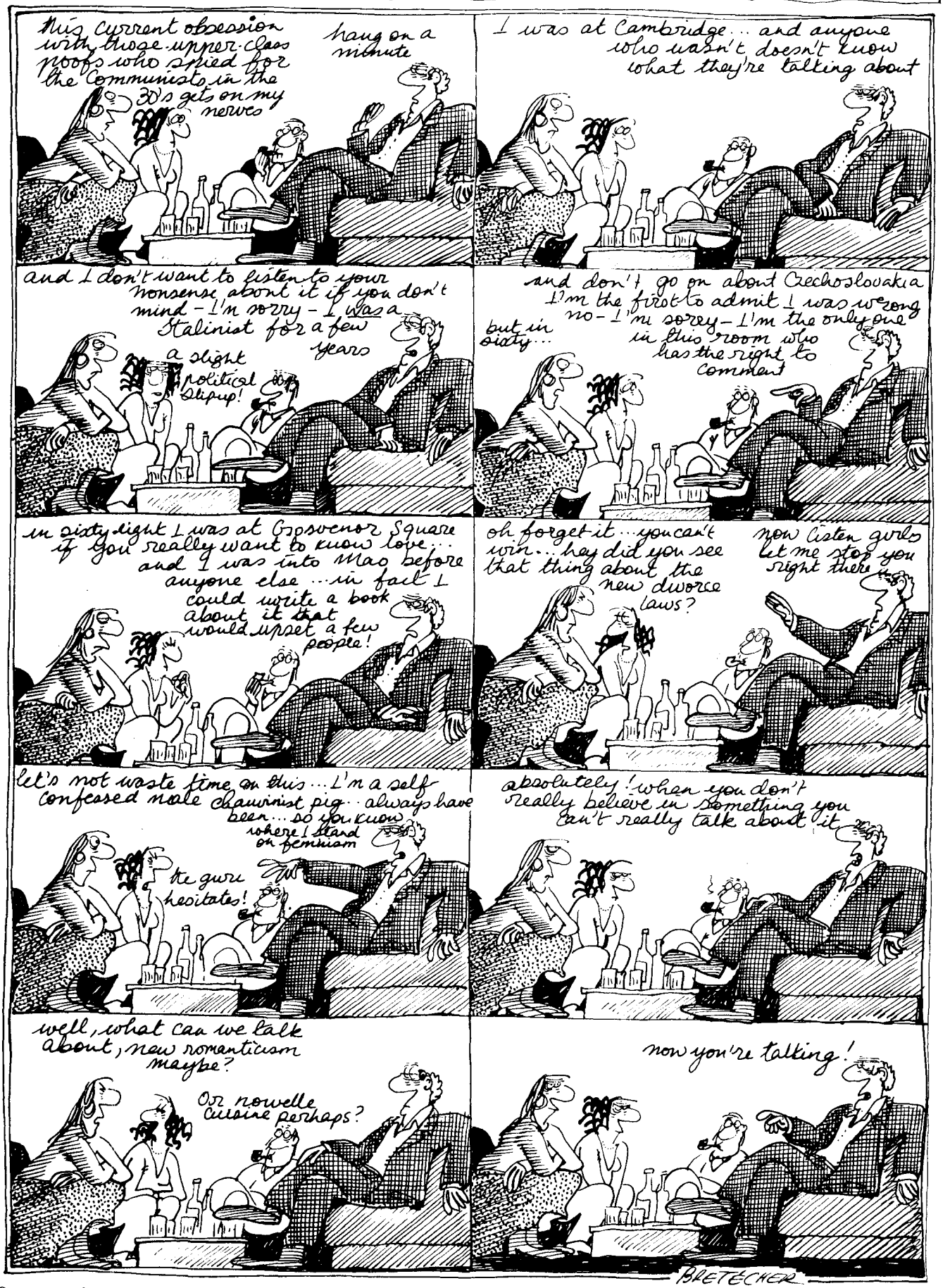
# BRETECHER

## RIGHT TO BE WRONG


This current obsession with those upper-class twoops who spied for the Communists in the 30's gets on my nerves
hang on a minute
I was at Cambridge... and anyone who wasn't doesn't know what they're talking about
and I don't want to listen to your nonsense about it if you don't mind - I'm sorry - I was a Stalinist for a few years
a slight political slipup!
and don't go on about Czechoslovakia I'm the first to admit I was wrong but in sixty... no - I'm sorry - I'm the only one in this room who has the right to comment
in sixty eight I was at Grosvenor Square if you really want to know love... and I was into Mao before anyone else ... in fact I could write a book about it that would upset a few people!
oh forget it ... you can't win ... hey did you see that thing about the new divorce laws?
now listen girls let me stop you right there
let's not waste time on this ... I'm a self confessed male chauvinist pig ... always have been ... so you know where I stand on feminism
the guru hesitates!
absolutely! when you don't really believe in something you can't really talk about it
well, what can we talk about, new romanticism maybe?
Or nouvelle cuisine perhaps?
now you're talking!
BRETECHER



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# LETTERS

## Cervical cancer screening

*Lesley Doyal, Sue Lister, Lisa Saffron, Jenny Stiles, Gill Yudkin, Women's Health Information Centre, 12 Ufton Rd, London N1*

Either the *New Statesman* has just committed one of the worst Freudian slips of all time or you really don't care very much about women's health. We refer of course to last week's front cover on which you headlined a story about cervical cancer as the 'great British cock-up'. It may seem like a joke to you, but it is not so funny for the millions of women who fear the disease and the thousands who die from it each year.

The article did have an important point to make. Current British policy on cervical screening *is* inadequate, not just because of the lack of a central call-back system, but because of the reduction in laboratory resources and the irrational method of paying GPs to perform smears only on older women and only at five yearly intervals. More money is certainly needed to improve the services and particularly to make them more accessible and acceptable to working-class women who have by far the highest incidence of the disease, but the lowest uptake of services. However, the author totally fails to situate this point in the more general debate on the causes of cervical cancer.

Most seriously, he seems to see screening as the one and only form of prevention. Of course screening is important, but it is, in reality, a form of diagnosis, effective only after the cells have already begun to change. Primary prevention should be concerned with eliminating whatever causes these changes in the first place. Here again, the article is misleading. It repeats the old myths about cervical cancer being caused by women's sexual habits without mentioning the obvious importance of men's 'promiscuity'. Nor does it mention the important new evidence concerning the link between cervical cancer in women and the occupation of their partners, or the possible link between cervical cancer and smoking. He repeats the argument that the contraceptive pill itself may be a cause of cervical cancer (which indeed it may). However, he does not point out that the most worrying aspect of the rise in pill use is probably the fact that it *reduces* the use of barrier contraception, thereby removing the most important defence women have against industrial chemicals, viruses, and any other sexually transmitted carcinogens.

Anyone requiring more information on the causes of cervical cancer and the politics of prevention should contact us at the above address. And, to reassure *NS* readers who may have been confused by the paragraph in the Le Fanu article on Scandinavia, cervical screening has *not* been discontinued there.

## Flash Gary?

*Andrew Anderson, Oxford*

Claudia Wright's proclaimed exposé (*NS* 16 March) of the US presidential candidate, left me wondering whether there wasn't something to be said for the man: if this is the worst that can be said about him, he may not be so shallow after all. 'Senate officials say that they can't recall a case where Hart opposed the building of any US base around the world', she says near the end; yet earlier on, we read: 'Hart joined . . . in opposing the. . . plan to create a large US naval and air base on Diego Garcia'.

Hart is no radical — he agreed with a suggestion that, if British, he'd support the SDP — but if he's to be properly hatcheted it needs more care and attention to detail than this sloppy piece of bathos, and more logic than is displayed in the closing notion that, just because he was less than scrupulous in his propaganda in a close election, he'd be a trigger-happy President.

## Women behind *Ulysses*

*Nicolas Walter, London N1*

Rupert Christiansen says (*NS* 16 March) that Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare & Company 'were the first to publish' *Ulysses* 'in 1921'. For one thing, their first edition of the book appeared in 1922. For another, large parts of the novel had already been published in American and British magazines — Margaret Anderson's *Little Review* in New York in 1918-20 and Harriet Weaver's *Egoist* in London in 1919 — the former being successfully prosecuted as a result. These two women share the achievement with Sylvia Beach, and should not be forgotten.

## Blackpool blues?

*John Baxendale, Sheffield*

'Islander' (*NS* 16 March), who quotes Tony Bennett on Blackpool to drag out the old yawn about the Left having no sense of humour, can't have read his article, which has more (and better) jokes in it than a month of 'Islander's' diaries.

As for 'a sense of the comic' (we used to say 'having a laugh') your mystery diarist can't have noticed the clutch of assorted lefty semioticians and structuralists who took the floor of the Tower Ballroom during last year's OU Summer School. Plenty of quotidian pleasure there — but not the sort *NS* writers go in for, I expect.

Let's come clean — it's Blackpool that's the problem, isn't it, not Bennett. After all, I could quote reams of wordy pomposity from the back half of the *NS*, but that doesn't count, does it — *they're* writing about *real* culture, after all, not the mere amusements of the mere masses. I await the day when the ghost of Roland Barthes displaces that of F. R. Leavis from your columns, but I fear I wait in vain.

## Shame on you

*Annie Rhodes, Huddersfield*

So three speeches received standing ovations at the Scottish Labour Party Conference: Neil Kinnock's, Tam Dalyell's and that of a '19-year-old lass from Motherwell' (*NS* 16 March). Could it be that she is unnamed because she is not leader of the Labour Party, or MP for Linlithgow, or because she is not a man?

I condemn Rob Edwards's reporting of this occasion as being discriminatory against women and young people, and request, as a regular reader of the *New Statesman* but mainly as a woman, that her name is printed with an apology so that she receives the same acclaim as Kinnock and Dalyell, and we — *New Statesman* readers — know who she is.

*Ed note:* we hope to reply next week.

## PDC's successor

*David Musson, London SE15*

In his article on PDC (*NS* 9 March), Christian Wolmar was kind enough to mention our plans for a new distribution service for radical publishers. He referred to the new service as XYZ. This was, however, just a working name — the name of the new co-op will be TURNAROUND DISTRIBUTION. Should any publishers, groups, bookshops, etc wish to find out more about our plans and proposed services please write to: Turnaround Distribution, c/o 14 Asylum Rd, London SE15.

## Missing Lincs

*Kathy Best, Skegness*

This was overheard recently in a Skegness newsagent:

*Woman to manager:* Have you got the *New Statesman?*

*Manager, indicating cigarette counter:* No, sorry, we only do John Player Special.

Lincolnshire was quoted in the Alternative Guide to England and Wales (a sort of home-knitted hitchhiker's guide to Europe) as being 'a large flat county with no big cities and no freak activities.' Is there any correlation here?

## Budberg Variations

*Edward Abelson, Warminster, Wilts*

Spy or no spy, Moura Budberg (*NS* 2 March) led a varied and interesting life. As you say she worked for Korda after Wells's death in 1946. Korda's involvement with British intelligence was prior to that during the war. She had met Korda much earlier, probably in 1931, when he first came to England and she was responsible for introducing Korda and Wells, a partnership that led to 'Things to Come' and 'The Man who could work miracles'.

She was an integral part of London's social and intellectual life from the '30s and '50s and counted among her acquaintances Kingsley Martin.

## Lukacs: the call never came

*G.M.R. Franzinetti, London SW4*

Nicholas Jacobs's remark (*NS* 16 March) that 'The old Lukacs. . . manifests an undiminished sense of self-importance' is a bit of an understatement. According to Cesare Cases (a leading Italian scholar of German literature, who was in close contact with Lukacs until the mid-'60s) Lukacs actually spent his time waiting for a call from the Party. The call was supposed to consist in a request for the *correct* Party line from Lukacs. The call, however, never came through.

## Help with our inquiries

Two journalists are interested in hearing from anyone who has been assaulted or suffered at the hands of shop security staff or store detectives. Full confidentiality guranteed. Please contact Gary Bryson at 59b Madeley Road, London W5, tel 01-998 3789 any time or Rod Lyons 01-340 1266 after 6pm.



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*Alison Eddy*

David Caute

# Endgames

**The Dialectics of Disaster: A Preface to Hope**
RONALD ARONSON *NLB* £18.50 *Verso* £5.95

The pages of this gruelling essay in synthesis do not make easy reading. They are haunted by catastrophe, madness, evil and rampant irrationality; by the notion of recurrent holocaust (Nazi, Soviet and 'bourgeois democractic' holocaust); by a premonition of imminent apocalypse; by Ronald Aronson's insistence that we have lived through a series of degradations unprecedented in human history; and by some often clumsy writing. A tendency towards heightened historical consciousness verging on sensationalism is perhaps no more responsible for the reader's strained nerves than the author's carefree blending of available vocabularies: Marxist, theological and pathological. The strikers in the team are Praxis, Evil and Madness.

Aronson can in fact write extremely well (as in his sensitive, finely balanced chapter about Zionism) but tends to lapse into that kind of academic language where the terms dominate meaning. For example: 'But those in the grip of madness put themselves beyond reach, they rupture with authentic discourse and alienate themselves from their reason.' I suppose to 'rupture with' is no worse than to 'break with': even so, 'rupturing with authentic discourse' is something of a verbal holocaust.

Hitler, Stalin, Vietnam, Palestine, the Bomb: Ronald Aronson will settle for nothing but the worst. He describes all these enormities as 'fantasy states, amalgams of madness and reality'. Drawing on Marx, he distinguishes between those holding effective power (i.e. the 19th-century bourgeoisie) and those who, holding merely tenuous state power, lack 'easy congruence' with the society they govern. Stalin and Hitler lacked 'easy congruence': and look what happened. 'In each case murder becomes the denial solution of an otherwise insoluble situation.'

Aronson permits himself an inspirational question: 'Is there reason to hope today?' The book is subtitled, rather awkwardly, 'A Preface to Hope'. This species of Hope, of course, is the transcendental, Hegelian Hope which makes all lower-case hopes look facile and frivolous. Hoping for eight score draws on Saturday, or more wind off Rhode Island, or less wind from Mr Richard West — these are hopes, not Hopes. I fear, even, that hoping for rain in Matabeleland doesn't qualify, though Aronson would probably agree that the 5th Brigade have, in their anxiety to pacify that drought-stricken area, 'ruptured with authentic discourse'. Aronson's point, or part of it, is that so long as the mushroom cloud hangs over us and we collectively face not only death but a no-future, then all daily, transitory hopes must seem trivial.

I don't dissent. Yet acute anxiety about nuclear holocaust may be (like not smoking) a preoccupation of the economically advanced societies. One notices, too, that Aronson's list of epoch-making crimes — Hitler, Stalin, Vietnam, the Bomb — are all products of Occidental man; it is the deviations from the high road of Western Progress which we single out as barbaric descents into madness, rather than the daily diet of man-made misery, butchery and intolerance which has been the common stock of experience elsewhere. The mountains of corpses on the borders of Iran and Iraq may excite the news agencies, but they will not cast a long shadow across the seminar rooms where paradigms, praxis and various structures are constantly remodelled by the intellectual vanguard into humanistic equivalents of the Crucifixion.

Aronson explains that 'evil is a praxis, and is therefore intelligible'. What is evil, then? It is not drought, famine, hurricane, cholera, kwashiorkor, malaria, earthquake or volcano; it is, on the contrary, 'mad, frozen, impotent human praxis, striving to lose touch with its source. . . It is the human become inhuman, the ordinary become demonic'.

I am not entirely at ease with this language: perhaps the copulation between fact and value is too easy. Are we 'human' only when we behave well? Is the hangman not human? And if the destructive instinct seems to live within people and all other predators as host rather than as alien, why borrow from a non-materialist vocabulary to call it 'demonic'? The poet may do so but Mr Aronson is no poet. Does one detect yet again a subscription to the stale, Rousseauesque piety that man is originally and 'naturally' as innocent as a spring daffodil? Must violent behaviour always be regarded as a regression?

Alongside 'evil' Aronson offers collective 'madness'. Since class struggle remains at the heart of history, he suggests that madness is the course chosen by social classes 'in order to be able to live an unliveable situation'. Here a grafting of existentialism is evident: one is reminded of Sartre discussing Genet or Flaubert. It is less Aronson's derivations that cause disquiet, however, than the notion of 'madness' itself when applied to the whole of nuclear technology on the ground that it 'breaks with the basic premises of all human life, namely survival itself'.



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What he means is 'species survival' (after all, men have made war and merrily slaughtered one another since the beginning of recorded history). Is Aronson suggesting that it is 'natural' to kill other men, *but not to kill them all, oneself included?* This, I think, is at the heart of his often brilliant and always stimulating discussion of the Bomb. Yet such was not the intention of the Manhattan Project; no such purpose inspired the labours of Oppenheimer, Fermi and Lawrence. It would be difficult to locate the precise moment at which nuclear technology surfaced as a threat to our survival as a species, and it would be even more difficult to expect mankind to have moved, at that moment of signalled danger, into a higher gear of reason and morality.

Neither 'reason' nor 'sanity' are monoliths — when Mr Edward Bond diagnoses Dr Owen as insane he is merely throwing egg. On either side of the wire at Greenham Common two types of rationality confront each other; I entirely subscribe to the women's, but nothing is gained by calling soldiers and police 'insane'. Inevitably we wobble on the nuclear brink while carrying roughly the same cargo of fear, prejudice and aggression as our Stone Age ancestors. We resemble a child clutching a hand grenade; but how can the awful quantum leap of modern physics from 20 million dead to everyone dead, from Second World War to Third, inspire a parallel quantum leap in human tolerance and fraternity?

Aronson writes very well of the small strategies by which we divert our attention from the looming truth: 'Yet on the brink everything seems solid and stable, as it has always been . . . those who sound the alarm can easily seem disruptive and hysterical to us.' Aronson's solution stems from the Marxist view of reification: we can demystify the world only if we act upon it collectively. His book is therefore not only a plea for sanity but also a call to action: we must triumph over inertia, false humility, fear, laziness, myopia. 'If our final victory is not foreordained, neither is our defeat. And so we fight on, sometimes grimly, sometimes joyously.' And what do we fight for? 'Sanity, truth, humanity, survival.' The word 'we' surfaces many times — and why not?

Writing is not speechwriting. The word 'we' represents both the most comradely and the most hostile of vantage points; comradely when it means 'not I alone', hostile when it signifies 'not you', 'not they'. The achievement of the women at Greenham Common is not merely to have resisted with mind and body, but also, despite harassment and violence, to have extended their idea of 'we' even to those who uproot and bully them. We who sit at home and play with words should take note. □

## Among this week's contributors:

DAVID CAUTE's most recent novel, *The K-Factor*, was published by Michael Joseph last summer; his most recent non-fictional work, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia*, by Allen Lane earlier in 1983.

ALAN BOLD's exhibition of Illuminated Poems opens at the National Poetry Centre in Earls Court on 29 March.

ADRIANNE BLUE writes mainly for the *Sunday Times* in this country and *Ms* in America.

## PARANORMAL
Nicolas Walter

# For and against

**Science and Parascience**
BRIAN INGLIS *Hodder* £12.95
**The Spiritualists**
RUTH BRANDON *Weidenfeld* £12.50

Brian Inglis, who is well known as a prolific journalist and historian, has studied the paranormal for 20 years, and is now its most persistent and persuasive propagandist in this country, advancing its claims in all sorts of periodicals and on all sorts of programmes. Six years ago he produced a book called *Natural and Supernatural*, subtitled 'A History of the Paranormal from Earliest Times to 1914'; now he has produced a sequel called *Science and Parascience*, subtitled 'A History of the Paranormal, 1914-1939'. The whole 900-page work is a remarkable achievement, but it isn't quite what it claims to be; it is really journalism rather than history, its approach being polemical rather than scholarly.

The two volumes contain not so much a history of the paranormal up to the Second World War as a passionate defence of its existence and an equally passionate attack on its opponents. Indeed the latter aspect seems to be the main one. Inglis doesn't show much interest in the message or motives of paranormal practitioners, but he is obsessed by their critics. He hates the scientific critics — the rationalists and materialists who have been sceptical about the probability or even the possibility of paranormal phenomena — but still more he hates the psychic critics — the believers in the paranormal in general who have been sceptical about particular phenomena, and who have in his view crippled psychic research because of their 'High-and-Dry' position (a term he borrows from J. G. Piddington 60 years ago).

Inglis's own position is 'Low-and-Wet'. He calls himself 'an unreconstructed agnostic in these matters', with no belief in any theories about such things as life after death or mysterious forces, but he nevertheless 'accept(s) the evidence for the paranormal on precisely the same basis as' that for scientific phenomena. His attitude is presented as a phenomenological one — that certain people experience certain events which should be considered 'as if' they were genuine and should be investigated in a positive spirit; in practice, however, he gives every appearance of believing almost everything. The great advantage of this position is that he doesn't have to make any attempt to explain any of the bizarre phenomena he describes, which enables him to discuss spirit materialisation or thought transference without bothering about their nature, and to build up a structure of evidence which looks impressive because of its quantity while avoiding a more critical examination which might raise doubts about its quality. He also disposes of the problem of cheating by paranormal practitioners by arguing that one who is caught cheating sometimes doesn't necessarily cheat all the time, and by concentrating instead on paranormal investigators who cheat. And so on.

But, bearing in mind this bias, the whole work is well worth reading. The first volume included a detailed account of the classic period of psychic research during the half-century before the First World War. The second volume begins with a summary of this period and then gives a detailed account of psychic research in Britain, the United States and continental Europe during the quarter-century before the Second World War. These years were significant because they saw the decline both of the old-fashioned physical phenomena and the old-fashioned mental phenomena provided by mediums, and the rise of self-advertising and semi-fraudulent investigators like Harry Price and of the much more scientific research into 'extra-sensory perception' by academics like J. B. Rhine.

Even on a journalistic level, there are several regrettable gaps in Inglis's account — no mention of the public debate in 1921 between Conan Doyle and Joseph McCabe, of the Besterman testimony experiment in 1933, etc.; only passing references to Stella Cranshaw and Borley Rectory; failure to recognise that

Alan Bold

## Loch Katrine: 'Glasgow's water supply'

A drizzling rain makes rings around the loch,
Small circles intersect at Ellen's isle.
These hills have rippling echoes, nature's style
Is counterpoint, a liquid fugue by Bach.

One hill might be a mountain, at the foot
Is fern. It's wet, its fringes coloured rust.
The summit's shy, it hides itself in mist
Which looks like smoke, the rocks smothered in soot.

The loch is drunk by Glasgow every day,
Is swallowed down with tea and nips of Scotch.
Glaswegians boil it, bathe in it, they catch
Its colours as it showers them with spray.

On the water floats a painted boat.
It's white, blacklettered thus: *Sir Walter Scott.*



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'Adelyne More' was a well-known pseudonym of C. K. Ogden; and failure to take into account the serious criticisms of even the best ESP experiments by critics from J. L. Kennedy to C. E. M. Hansel, and the brusque dismissal of such critics as Theodore Besterman and E. J. Dingwall. At a higher level, the work fails because, despite his denial, Inglis acts as counsel for the defence.

Ruth Brandon may be seen as counsel for the prosecution. Her book *The Spiritualists*, which was published last year, is subtitled 'The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries' and is an equally journalistic and biased survey of paranormal phenomena associated with mediums from the 1840s to the 1930s. It has been the object of furious criticism by believers, especially Brian Inglis himself, but it is well worth reading, if only as a counterweight to his own more ambitious work. Perhaps the most valuable parts are the description of various methods of cheating and the discussion of the will to believe in the paranormal. *The Spiritualists* joins other recent critical books such as C. E. M. Hansel's *ESP and Parapsychology* (1980) and James Randi's *Flim-Flam!* (1982), both published by Prometheus Books. It is now possible to read good books on both sides of the debate. Will it ever be possible to write a book which isn't biased in either direction? □

**SEX**
Adrianne Blue

# The quest

**Desire: The Politics of Sexuality**
eds. ANN SNITOW, CHRISTINE STANSELL, SHARON THOMPSON *Virago* £6.50
**The Left and the Erotic**
ed. EILEEN PHILLIPS *Lawrence & Wishart*
£8.95 & £3.95

In the beginning, when god made heaven, was Kinsey. And Kinsey said:

> Females appear to be as capable as males of being aroused by tactile stimuli; they appear as capable as males of responding to the point of orgasm. Their responses are not slower than those of the average male . . . We find no reason for believing that the physiologic or psychologic satisfactions derived from orgasm by the average female are different from those of the average male.

And came the sexual revolution. And the feminists multiplied. And it was proclaimed: thou shalt lust. In Gomorrah, that land across the Atlantic, this was the gospel of 'swinging' and many feminists did swing. And they did eat freely of the worm.

And then did the daughters of the land weep. And the feminists multiplied. For they were fucking more but enjoying it little. And they clasped one another. And the bearded men of the land said, 'But what do women want now?'

And the prophet Anne Koedt told of the myth of the vaginal orgasm, and said: 'Sexually a woman is not seen as . . . a person with independent desires.' Then began the long and lonely battle, the battle of self-doubt.

A stewed, skew Biblical history? No, for Germaine Greer will not be the last (and certainly was not the first) to call sex the post-Christian religion. This has been the chronicle of the new religion. On now, from blasphemy, to self-doubt.

That muddy Flanders has been, in this decade, the terrain between women's insistence on their right to sexual pleasure and their demonstrably reasonable fear of being used, abused, objectified — in advertisements, in pornography, in bed.

'The seemingly most intimate details of private existence are actually structured by larger social relations,' explain the historian Ellen Ross and the anthropologist Rayna Rapp, at the very start of 'Sex and Society', their adroit synthesis in **Desire.** Sexuality — its expression and its restriction — changes in response to social structures: the personal is political.

Yes, but, warns *Feminist Review's* Eileen Phillips in **The Left and the Erotic.** 'The noose of negative critiques of sexual relations' strangles 'the excitements or compulsions or delights of sensual existence'. Both anthologies, one imported from America, one indigenous, begin the intellectual and emotional work of reclaiming those delights.

But feminists (most of us) as opposed to Feminists (a minuscule lunatic minority who base their behaviour on what they read about themselves in the *Daily Mail* and the *New York Post*) have not, as is claimed, spent the last ten or fifteen years proscribing each other's sex practices. Nor have they/we been contemplating our navels chastely instead of attending to our lovers' genitalia, though we did have problems in bed. Problems which practical sexology — Masters and Johnson, *The Joy of Sex, The Joy of Lesbian Sex* — only compounded. Orgasm was obtainable; joy was more difficult.

Furthering the insights of Koedt at last, these books take the step *Sweet Freedom* urges, beyond 'challenging the status quo to working out an alternative approach'.

Virago has truncated the original, more abstract American title *Powers of Desire,* partly because it is such a mouthful, partly because the title (and nearly 100 pages) addresses sado-masochism, the issue so over-emphasised in current American feminist debate. 'Master and Slave' by the psychotherapist Jessica Benjamin attempts to sanitise (and embourgeoise?) sado-masochism, arguing that the child's early experience of nurturance *and* domination by its parents has made 'issues of control and submission' permeate even '"normal" adult love'.

That other much discussed document, Adrienne Rich's attack on the unspoken ideology of compulsory heterosexuality, available elsewhere (Onlywomen Press, 1981), insists that choice would give women 'collective power to determine the meaning and place of sexuality in their lives'.

*Desire,* a hefty, heterogeneous, useful book, contains essays and a few stories and poems by nearly 40 women, among them Rich, Ellen Willis, Alix Kates Shulman, and an essay by one token gay man.

Of the ten informed, personal and intellectually provocative contributions in *The Left and the Erotic,* three are by men including heterosexuals. Jon Cook questions Foucault's reticence about feminism in *The History* (1976). Michèle Roberts's intense poems are, intentionally, prurient.

Talk of women's fantasies of submission (but not much of the fantasies which used to be unspeakable, those of being on top) which so permeates *Desire* is here too, in Phillips and in Elizabeth Wilson's constructive 'A new romanticism?' The notorious 1982 scholarly Conference on Sexuality in New York, with its outspoken fetishising, left Wilson wondering why, for so many, 'the path to adventure lies through the tent of the Sheik?' Or for that matter in the pages of romantic novels.

Perhaps women read Mills and Boon fiction for the same reason they read Virago's: the books are written from within women's experience. And Mills and Boon's product sells not just because it is so available (they are artists at marketing) but because so many women (many of them married, and many of them pre-feminist) still don't know what an orgasm is. That vague tingle lets fantasy leap.

What needs more consideration, though, is the point Marge Piercy, the poet and novelist, makes in last month's issue of the American feminist magazine *Ms.*

> I have given a lot of rope to my sexual curiosity over the years and it has led me into many adventures and strange encounters; but none of them offered the pure sexual pleasure of being in my own bed with someone I trust and love.

The turn-on of intimacy. The last feminist heresy? □


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## Jonathan Swift: Political Writer

J.A. DOWNIE *Routledge* £25

In the absence of hard proof, various aspects of Swift's life have always been subjected to guesswork, notably his concurrent relationships with Hetty Johnson ('Stella') and Esther Vanhomrigh ('Vanessa'). Scholars have long wrangled, for instance, over the theory that Swift married Stella in 1716. The union was, supposedly, unconsummated: they lived apart and never even met without someone else being present. By contrast, J.A. Downie's succinct critical biography largely eschews speculation, serving as a useful reminder of just what are the established facts. Where Stella and Vanessa are concerned, this inevitably places Swift in a kinder light, since what is known about his behaviour towards them is far less discreditable than the emotional ill-treatment that has been inferred.

Downie claims that his most original contribution is a revision of 'the prevailing view of Swift's politics'. Actually, it isn't *that* original. Early critics held that it was Swift's hunger for clerical preferment that, in 1710, led to him relinquishing his Whig connections and accepting the role of propagandist for Harley's new Tory administration. More recent writers, though, have foreshadowed Downie's argument here: that Swift's 'turnaround', while coloured by self-interest, was consistent with his longstanding beliefs. He had always supported the High-Church Anglicanism of the Tories (the Whigs were soft on Nonconformity) and, by 1710, they seemed closer to embodying the Old Whig political principles that Swift cherished than did the Modern Whigs. Where Downie differs, subtly, from these writers is in arguing that, while a Tory in the practical sense, Swift never became one in terms of political ideals.

It would be a pity if this serviceable book were entirely eclipsed by the recent completion of Irvin Ehrenpreis's three-volume Life. There's always room for the compact alongside the comprehensive. But that price-tag. . .

**David Montrose**

## Redundant Women

ANGELA COYLE *Women's Press* £3.95

The book's last words mix appeal, challenge and warning: 'In recession the legacy of social democracy is a very fragile one. . . The times require offensive strategies and politics of vision, but can men let go?' The question highlights Coyle's intention; she turns a detailed analysis of female unemployment in two clothing factories into an exposure of the political and economic framework in which female redundancy takes place.

Such a study may seem at first glance undramatic. The author refuses to slide even momentarily into polemic: quietly and grimly, facts speak for themselves — women are being made redundant at twice the rate of men; piecework in factories often brings home as little as £10 a week; the difficulty that married women have in claiming unemployment benefit increases. Women have been the invisible victims in employment as they are now in unemployment, and those who lose their jobs are not even properly recorded in government statistics.

Angela Coyle reveals the exploitation of women in work, their betrayal by the male-run unions and then follows the redundant women on to the discriminating job market. The bone-grinding schedule of a working woman's life, the isolation of a redundant woman's days are juxtaposed with the familial ideology which has successfully marginalised women's work both inside and outside the home. Finally, she asks, 'What is to be done?' The question, weighted as it is by the accumulation of damning fact, is more powerful than the general answers: stronger collective action, more childcare facilities, flexi-time, and a breakdown in gender divisions.

But at the heart of the book is emotion. The pivotal chapter is a patchwork of five women's voices, and their honest and understated daily courage gives a meaning to statistics and erodes mythology as no authorial rhetoric could ever do. Each voice carries a different message — the mood ranges from optimism to apathy ('I used to feel lonely but there again I'm used to it') to despair ('I'm finished'). But there is a common undercurrent to the polyphony: anger is expressed, but not bitterness; statements of depression never become a litany of complaint. Dignity.

**Nicci Gerrard**

## Alexander Fleming: The Man and the Myth.

GWYN MACFARLANE *Chatto* £12.50

For so many people round the world Alexander Fleming is the man who discovered penicillin, and who in direct consequence saved, and is still saving, millions of lives that would otherwise have been lost. As a result of this belief he was lauded and feted from Buenos Aires to Salonika; from Calcutta to Louisville. He received a knighthood in 1944 and a (shared) Nobel Prize in 1945. Alexander Fleming is a *hero* of science.

The prime thesis of Macfarlane's indulgent biography is that much of this adulation was unmerited. Fleming made a serendipitous discovery because he was a good observant scientist. Yet he failed properly to recognise its potential and allowed it to lie fallow for 12 years. Howard Florey was the father of penicillin the drug rather than penicillin the scientific curiosity. It was only after Florey's work started to bear fruit that Fleming reclaimed his discovery. Macfarlane believes that Florey deserved to share Fleming's glory.

More interesting than this scientific beauty contest is the book's demonstration that the discovery and development of penicillin depended upon many scientists. Fleming's Nobel Prize was shared not only with Florey, but also with Ernst Chain, while around this trio was a penumbra of others who all made significant contributions. Science is a social product, and so was Sir Alexander Fleming. He was a totem manufactured to fulfill the need for an individual god to whom worshippers could give grateful thanks. The problem lies not with the choice of the wrong god, but rather in the selection of a monotheistic religion.

**Glyn Ford**

## A Quiet Violence: View from a Bangladesh Village

BETSY HARTMANN and JAMES BOYCE *Zed Press* £16.95 & £5.95

'A quiet violence stalks the villages of Bangladesh: the violence of needless hunger. It kills slowly, but as surely as any bullet, and it is just as surely the work of men.'

It is the inevitable conclusion of a pathetic catalogue of misery lightened only by the villagers' own humanity. Hartmann and Boyce spent most of 1974 observing and sharing the lives of the poor in rural Bangladesh. Their report only just avoids despair. The villagers of 'Katni' — the pseudonym means 'hard labour' — are at the mercy of almost everyone: the landlords who lure them into hopeless debt and then take their fields; the merchants hoarding rice and salt so that, in a salt-producing country, 1974 saw scarcity and riots; the politicans — 'He told the shopkeepers, vote for me or you're a dead man!' — and the police who raid the village ostensibly looking for criminals but actually bent on extortion; the moneylenders, the lawyers, the cartels, even the international aid organisations. Sarcasm is reserved for these, for each misguided scheme bolsters the position of the rich élite, whether it be the World Bank tubewells that somehow irrigate only the big land-owners' fields, or the emergency relief blankets — the same landlord got those. All that reaches the villagers is ripples of farce. The authors witness the distribution of direct grant food-aid — one stale biscuit each from a US Defence Department tin dating from the Cuban missile crisis ten years before. The villagers regard the cornucopia with dismay: 'I thought America was a rich country. Why do you eat these things?'

There is no sentimentality, no brotherhood of the oppressed, for the villagers are also at the mercy of each other, victims of Karnal, the miser whose 'greed verges on desperation', or wives of men brutalised by the struggle to survive. A farmer watches a starving woman stealing from his fields: 'But what can I do?'

Before anything else can be done, say the authors, land tenure must be reformed. Finally, not all the half-baked advice and bungled projects in the world can compensate for landlessness.

**Jonathan Hugh-Jones**

## By Word of Mouth: Elite Oral History

ANTHONY SELDON and JOANNA PAPWORTH *Methuen* £11.95 & £5.95

Like Beatrice Webb's brief Appendix on interviewing in *My Apprenticeship* (1926), this book is aimed at the novice and 'concerned with the process and value of asking questions and gathering information from those who forged or witnessed events in history'. It analyses the criticisms and disadvantages of oral history, discusses the techniques of interviewing and evaluation of oral evidence, presents practical examples from modern histories and literary biographies, and includes a useful section on oral archives in Britain. The authors had a lively response to their own questionnaires and interviews, and reveal the methods of distinguished authors in an interesting way. Their study is clearly written but rather long-winded, lacks an index and contradicts itself about the time (six or nine hours?) and cost (£200 or £500?) of transcribing a one-hour interview.

Most researchers would agree with Nigel Nicolson that 'with the present dearth of private letters and diaries, the oral interview may come to be a major method of recording the unpublished details of contemporary events'. The essential quality of an interview is preparedness, though Paul Ferris cynically believes that flattery is the key to success. About 60 per cent of the researchers take notes, 18 per cent use tape recorders and 22 per cent rely on memory. The authors rightly recommend visiting the places associated with the subject to absorb the atmosphere, but frown on the provocative listing of churls who refuse to be interviewed. They warn that informants tend to screen out distant with more recent versions of what occurred and to repeat (in a disturbingly familiar fashion) what they have already written.

The recommended methodology is sensible but somewhat rigid. The request for signature of a written agreement and limitation of the length of the talk would encourage a freeze rather than a flow of conversation. Paradoxically, the most unreliable witnesses are often the best, for drunken and even mad informants are willing to offer rarely recorded sexual revelations. The difficulties of gaining access to medical records, which are not always destroyed after seven years, have impeded our understanding of diseased and demented writers. This book tends to confirm Lytton Strachey's observation: 'It is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one.'

**Jeffrey Meyers**



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## FICTION
Grace Ingoldby

# Lessons in life

**The Course of Instruction**
DAVID WHELDON *Bodley Head* £7.95
**Small World**
DAVID LODGE *Secker* £8.95
**One Day of Life**
MANLIO ARGUETA *Chatto* £8.50 & £3.95
**Something Out There**
NADINE GORDIMER *Cape* £8.50

David Wheldon's second novel begins innocuously enough. Alexander, a laboratory worker, receives an apparently 'official' letter inviting him to attend a course. Not ordered to go, he feels oddly compelled to — arrangements are made; the pace is swift; while waiting on the station platform for his train, a foretaste of horror slips like a razor-blade into his mind. It had never occurred to him before 'how precarious and ignorant a state of mind self-confidence was'.

There is worse to come. Wheldon's writing is precise and chilly, the authoritative hand in the small of the back pushing one further down the corridor and into the dark. Arriving at No 28, ordinary house, ordinary town, clock marking an 'unimportant' hour, Alexander finds himself adrift in a world in which his every expectation of human behaviour suddenly seems off-key. Here nothing can be taken for granted, nothing is defined, everything is slightly ambiguous, distressingly, disorientatingly different; even his blunders are no longer individual but perceived as typical, predictable, uninteresting: 'The recipients of letters always seem to be hampered by the confusion of prior experiences . . . we have unreasonable confidence in ourselves, not so much a fault as a misunderstanding . . . you cling to your old standards as though they had an unalterable existence in their own right.'

Mental disorientation is accompanied by physical fear. Resisting melodrama, Wheldon's mix of the familiar and the strange make **The Course of Instruction** a convincing, disturbing read. 'Occasionally,' comments a masterful servant, 'you meet those who think they have discovered the purpose of the message . . . it's usually the case that the ones with the poorest and crudest arguments are the very ones who shout out that they have the greatest right to communicate their conclusions . . . like everyone else they grow old. There is no talk of reason when the night fevers come and the cot-sides are put in place.'

WHILE ONE CAN identify with Wheldon's Alexander, David Lodge's campus hybrids — Morris Zapp (worldly American), Persse McGarrigle (Romantic, representing Emerald Isle, Catholic purity and the joke Irish University), Philip Swallow (menopausal author of boring book on Hazlitt) and Angelica (instant Fonda/Brainstrust mix) — are less sympathetic; neither funny peculiar nor, indeed, ha ha.

**Small World** concerns the jet-set literary conference circuit and the Structuralist debate, spiced by the Brian Rix element of academics eagerly divesting themselves of more than cap and gown. Rummidge University, a 'God-forsaken hole' in the old tradition, might in other hands (Bradbury's or, more recently, Howard Jackson's) prove the point that the old jokes are still the best — but Lodge wields the trowel like the joke Irish builder he has yet to invent. Observation is sloppy and the ghost of Aesop slips by in a shroud: 'Clumsy jesting is no joke.'

Argueta's 'authorities', like Kundera's, cannot joke or smile lest they be revealed as too absurd. **One Day of Life** is the story of Lupe, grandmother at 40, a peasant woman from Chalate in El Salvador. Argueta is a prize-winning poet and novelist, an exiled Salvadorian, and this first English translation shows him to be a perceptive and gentle man as he weaves his political story around Lupe's 'God-given' day, deftly writing in the awful history of his homeland through the monologues of her extant family and friends.

Whether political novels can actually stop us in our tracks as the sleeve-notes claim is debatable. The story is a sad one, delicately told, revealing not only Lupe's fate as she is caught in the cross-fire of civil war but also (and as remote from our understanding) the peasant life of birds and flowers and dust, the colours of a country woven in a blanket, infant mortality, hunger, water, a precious commodity offered as a symbolic, superstitious gift to friends and enemies alike.

The mirthless authorities have their say: boys equipped with fast philosophy and automatics who do well to overlook the fact that they rose from the ranks of the people they now subdue. 'We'd never eaten with a knife and fork,' their piece begins, for they are as impressed by the novelties of cutlery and mashed potatoes as by their instructors in 'necessary' cruelty. Well-fed and backed by 'the most civilized country in the world' (guess who?), they are brainwashed into believing that the people have been brainwashed too: 'Who is our special enemy? The people.' Lupe's story tells of the silent erosion of normal behaviour, the effects of intimidation and terror that mark, as in Northern Ireland now, a prolonged period of civil war, and of lessons learnt the hard way: Christian goodness must no longer be confused with resignation; stoicism in the face of horror (her son's severed head on a pole) is not only dignified but advisable — never show your fear. Rights are something that Lupe must learn to understand and to fight for, a new way of enduring, a significant if small-scale step forward.

Gordimer's stories in **Something Out There** suffer sometimes from an excess of skill over emotion, but this lioness of the medium is very fit and can still thrill by a well-timed pounce. The title story nicely blends the escape of a 'creature' that terrorises the Jo'burg suburbs and a black and white foursome intent in their own way on doing the same. Most interesting is the reply to Kafka's famous unsent 'Letter to his Father': a fine idea written with the force of deep hurt. 'Rest in peace my son,' it concludes, 'I wish you had let me.' □

## SOCIAL HISTORY
Bob Woffinden

# M-Onitoring

**Speak for Yourself: A Mass-Observation Anthology 1937-49**
ANGUS CALDER & DOROTHY SHERIDAN
*Cape* £12.50

The abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 provoked a sharp awareness among the middle-class intelligentsia of 'the extraordinary hold which the monarchy retained over the British popular imagination'. Since this hadn't previously been perceived, the episode highlighted the chasms in society, between the establishment and the people, between the press and public opinion. Those on the top-side of the cultural divide simply did not understand the emotional character of those underneath.

At a time when popular mass movements across Europe were assuming an ever more threatening character, the existence of this gap was not without its political resonance. Mass-Observation was an attempt to bridge the gulf, by making a documentary study of those hitherto unrecorded aspects of everyday society. If the emotions underlying anti-Semitism, for example, were better understood, then perhaps they could be better countered.

The movement's founders, Tom Harrisson and Charles Madge, came into contact through the correspondence columns of the *New Statesman* in January 1937. Their work became complementary: Harrisson gathered together a team of observers to monitor the minutiae of social behaviour in Bolton (dubbed 'Worktown' for the purposes of the exercise, confidentiality always being strictly maintained), while Madge operated from his home in Blackheath, London, organising a national panel of volunteers who kept a detailed record of their daily routine. M-O was never market research. It was more intimate than that and, from the beginning, blended objective and subjective material.

The whole procedure may not have been rigorously scientific, but neither was it unacceptably random. Harrisson *et al* remained preoccupied with methodology. Nevertheless, the data did accumulate far faster than it could be processed. Also, the finances of the

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organisation — which relied for funding on philanthropic industrialists or enlightened publishers — were never sound. Despite these difficulties, M-O was able to publish a string of reports on aspects of contemporary British life, and a 1939 Penguin Special, *Britain*, was especially successful.

Public reaction to M-O was divided. The less conservative parts of the British press took some interest, and even gave Harrisson opportunities to supplement his erratic income. George Orwell and *NS* editor Kingsley Martin were among those to recognise the value of the reports. Others regarded Mass-Observers as interfering private eyes. When, during the war, the M-Oers undertook social survey work for Duff Cooper's Ministry of Information, the *Daily Express* branded them 'Cooper's Snoopers'.

Judging by the meticulous report on late-night sexual activity on Blackpool beach at August bank holiday weekend, such disparagement could hardly have been entirely unexpected. But the over-riding importance of the work should not be underestimated. The most obvious vindication of M-O's methods came with Harrisson's 1944 analysis of the state of nationwide political opinion, in which he predicted a 'probable Labour victory, by a wide margin, at the next election'. Right up to the end, all those relying on conventional punditry anticipated a triumph for Churchill.

This book is not a history of M-O (apparently, that is a separate project on which Calder is currently engaged), but a selection from the voluminous records which Harrisson deposited at Sussex University in 1970. Sheridan is custodian of the archive. Whether as vignettes of individual experience or as illustrations of social conditions, the extracts make richly rewarding reading.

Some of the material is a total revelation. For example, more than two years after the Blitz, Londoners were still seeking nightly refuge in the Underground stations.

> In the beginning they went mainly for safety; but they went on going for a thousand social or psychological reasons which have nothing to do with air-raids. In finally leaving the tubes, many were leaving a life and an environment which suited them much better than 'ordinary' life would ever do.

M-O itself was never prevailed upon to sign the Official Secrets Act, and so this book reveals an uncensored picture of Britain at war, complete with looting, shirking and defeatism.

Similarly, fascinating data was collected on sex in Blackpool: there was far less of it than was commonly supposed. The beach after hours was hardly a philanderer's heaven. M-O discovered that 'the amount of actual extra-marital sexual intercourse is negligible, less than on a Saturday night in Bolton'. Local civic leaders attempted to deride these findings, believing the maintenance of the myth vital for local commerce.

In fact, the demystification of sexual practices could only be socially beneficial — in reducing sexual tensions, for example — and it was in areas like this, and the survey of attitudes towards birth control, that M-O could be at its most effective. Standard market research surveys never penetrated such social taboos since, as Harrisson explained, people often gave 'respectable' opinions to strangers. □

**MUSIC**
Andrew Clements

# Playing safe

**Music of Eight Decades**
*Festival Hall*
**The Great British Music Festival**
*Festival Hall*

When the **Music of Eight Decades** series was launched in 1981 it was hailed as the first collaboration between the BBC and the major London orchestras in a public venture. The idea, conceived by the BBC's Controller of Music Robert Ponsonby and the chairman of the London Orchestral Concert Board William Glock, was an intelligent way to give shape and purpose to the independent orchestras' timid and erratic ventures into 20th-century repertory; expenses were to be shared between the Corporation and the orchestras, each giving four concerts, and within the umbrella of a subscription series a faithful audience would be built up — no longer would an orchestra risk financial disaster by programming the arcane and the demanding.

In the event three of the four symphony orchestras took part alongside the BBC Symphony; the absentee was the London Philharmonic and its place was taken by the ever willing London Sinfonietta. The venture was generally a success; programmes were varied and wide ranging, and included a healthy sprinkling of premières, while attendances ranged from the tolerable to the excellent. Yet the independent orchestras were dissatisfied: they felt themselves constrained by the arrangement, for the Arts Council funds allocated to them specifically for the performance of 20th-century music were channelled exclusively into the series. That at least was the public complaint, though the orchestras' well advertised antipathy to programming and rehearsing contemporary music simmered beneath the surface.

A second series of *Music of Eight Decades* was organised by the BBC and the LOCB for the 1983-'84 season, and it was hardly a surprise to discover that the Big Four orchestras were nowhere to be seen; it had become the exclusive property of the BBC Symphony and the Sinfonietta, each taking four programmes. The other orchestras instead came up with a scheme of their own, co-ordinated by the Association of British Orchestras: **The Great British Music Festival** is bruited as the first collaboration between the four orchestras — memories are very short — and despite the poor audiences at the concerts I've attended (far fewer than for *any* Festival Hall programme in the *Eight Decades* series) it has already been pronounced a success and a follow-up is being planned for next season.

Dominic Photography

**Maxwell Davies and Birtwistle are ignored by the *Great British Music Festival*. . . . . .**

If the Festival accomplished what its title implied — to present a survey of the finest achievements in British music between 1925 and 1975 — I would have less cause for complaint, though still find room to bemoan the parochialism that insists that anything modern is to be mistrusted and doubly so if it is foreign as well. But the parade of the mediocre and lost causes that has furnished this first series is quite stultifying. The programme book is the most revealing document of all. It is prefaced by a short essay by Vaughan Williams on the subject of 'National Music', and a modestly titled 'Survey of choral and orchestral music' by Lewis Foreman which is so astounding in its partiality that I had to re-read it several times to make sure that I hadn't skipped some pages or that the printer hadn't omitted vital copy.

Foreman covers this half-century of British music in generous historical sweeps, alighting on the neglected figures for special mention. For any student of that curious phenomenon in British music of making silk purses out of artistic sows' ears, the list of forgotten heroes will be entirely predictable: Lord Berners, Constant Lambert, Havergal Brian, George Lloyd. It is a survey that fails to mention anything by Britten written after *Peter Grimes* or by Tippett after *The Midsummer Marriage*, or anything at all by Elisabeth Lutyens, Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, Harrison Birtwistle, Robin Holloway or Oliver Knussen.



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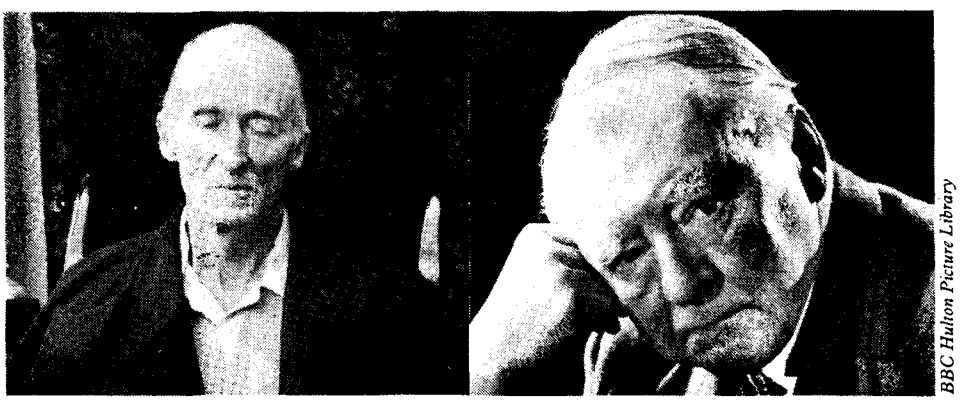
The history of British music has been rewritten, with its most challenging and finest composers omitted, and such an approach has served as a model for the series. There are just three works in it by composers still under 50 — Tavener's *The Whale*, a kind of comic-strip modernism, Paul Patterson's eclectic and ultimately entirely conventional Requiem, and the first performance of John McCabe's second piano concerto, well-made, civilised music, without anything as ticklish as originality.

Foreman and the organising committee find no room in their programmes for Britten, nor for his teacher Frank Bridge (arguably the most truly deserving of all neglected figures), nor, it almost goes without saying, for any of the composers listed above. There are instead two works each by Lennox Berkeley and Robert Simpson and, presumably to celebrate anniversaries of one kind or another, generous representations of Bax and Delius. Had the series been better planned and executed its effect might have been less baleful; as it stands the programmes appear thrown together.

I hesitate to impute any motives in this farrago — never ascribe to malevolence what could be explained by incompetence is a handy motto — but it's difficult to suppress the feeling that all this effort represents somebody's desperate attempt to roll back the boundaries of musical modernism, to return to good old musical standards, a cultural counterpart to Thatcher's Victorian values. How else to explain the absence of anything remotely challenging in the series? (If the concerts have genuinely been planned to provide the orchestras with something meaty to get stuck into, I can but observe that in the programmes I heard they showed little sign of relishing it; all belonged to the least impressive category of orchestral playing I've encountered this season.)

Meanwhile *Music of Eight Decades* gets into its stride over the next couple of months. This This Friday brings the European première of Lutoslawski's third symphony, conducted by the composer; the first performance of Muldowney's saxophone concerto is promised in a Sinfonietta programme later in the spring. For all the worthwhile music the series contains, something rather formula-ridden has crept into the planning; the special nature of a subscription series has rather been squandered. None of the concerts would be out of place in the standard South Bank concerts of either partner, the connecting thread between them is one of simple juxtaposition rather than content.

*Music of Eight Decades* is essentially such a splendid idea, the best for packaging contemporary music in London that anyone has yet come up with; it deserves to be improved. If audience loyalty can be maintained, more obscure composers and repertory could be included — up to now it has kept fairly firmly to the well-trodden paths through contemporary music — even unestablished figures. There should also be room for the occasional spectacular, along the lines of the performance of Stockhausen's *Momente* which the BBC promoted in 1973 and which still sticks in my mind as the most sheerly exciting modern-music experience I've had. A concert performance of Zimmermann's opera *Die Soldaten* might be a suitable start. There is audience support for bold endeavour; if the organisers themselves lack the resolve, I suggest they just read through the programme of the *Great British Music Festival*, very slowly. . . . □



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**. . .which is generous to Delius and Bax**

**FILMS**
John Coleman

# In the wings

**The Dresser** (PG)
*Odeon, Haymarket*
**Streamers** (18)
*Classic, Haymarket; Gate, Notting Hill*
**Uncommon Valour** (18)
*Plaza*

Back in the Fifties Ronald Harwood not only acted in Sir Donald Wolfit's company at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith; he was also that mesmerising megalomaniac's dresser for a spell: subsequently he wrote a biography of Wolfit. So much is prologue, then, to Mr Harwood's highly acclaimed stage play of 1980, in which he thriftily and craftily wrung the last drop of laughter and pathos from these experiences, this knowledge.

The old proposal that no man is a hero to his valet provided a fascinating theme on which to compose variations; Tom Courtenay got a plum part as Norman, homosexual skivvy and back-stage confidant, that he exquisitely juggled with both hands — hands constantly on the move, sulkily cradling his chin, thrust out palms down from hip level, daintily conjuring a pocketed quarter-bottle for frequent sips, cajoling, clenching, never still: not surprisingly, the piece was called **The Dresser**. An element of calculated cuteness, of course, in all this, since the bullying, ailing actor-manager, Norman's Sir, touring Shakespeare during World War II, has a role of at least equal importance and surely even greater demands. Certainly, in Harwood's film version of the play, expertly directed by Peter Yates, Albert Finney gives one of his more memorable cinema performances as monstrously sacred Sir, persuaded to bellow, whimper, stride and subside through *Lear* while on his last legs.

There is a splendidly funny opened-out scene when his magisterial and measured progress down a station platform at the head of his cast, with Norman scampering in advance to implore the driver to hold things ('Sod off!' is the


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response), leads to the engine pulling out. 'Stop... that... train!' booms Sir, camera yielding a shot of the station's lofty roof as if that organ-voice were hitting the gallery or gods. And the train stops. But the primary action is inevitably and properly theatre-bounded, at the Bradford Alhambra, and even there mostly limited to the wings and Sir's dressing-room.

Two sustained sequences quite stand out. As Finney's Lear rants and howls during the storm, the back-stage troupers crank a wind-machine, bang drums, make lightning until arrogant Oxenby (Edward Fox), no admirer of Sir's, unbends for an instant to snatch the thunder-sheet from Norman's feeble paws and shake absolute hell from it. And, when the ambitious, worshipful young ASM (Cathryn Harrison) offers herself briefly to the presumed dirty-old-man handling of Sir, it is Norman who bitchily relishes breaking the news to her about the fumbling and lifting: Sir's wife, Her Ladyship (Zena Walker), has become — all too literally — burdensome for the old man: 'He wants a *lighter* Cordelia'. Repeating his stage role, Lockwood West, chubby, ageing, does a lovely, ridiculous bit, abruptly cast as the Fool, woefully flapping bladder on stick in a last-minute audition, being warned by Sir, '*I* have the tears in this play... Serve the playwright and keep your teeth in.'

Cruel and comical lines, along with some tender ones, keep a theatrical crackle of emotion going between Norman and Sir, Courtenay and Finney, but the keenest pleasure perhaps comes in detail — Norman testing the water in Sir's hip-bath with an elbow that somehow contrives to camp — and, above all, in the roar of the grease-paint, as an (as it were) already brilliantly made-up Finney is beguiled and chivvied by his dresser-turned-tyrant into slowly donning the slap, whiskers and wig of the mad old king.

Much of this is insider's entertainment. But several things rattled my enjoyment. There's the tired old cliché of Eileen Atkins, sternly plain as Madge, the company's stage manager who has suffered unrequited love for Sir during 20 years. Less than perfunctoriness is accorded to relations between Sir and Her Ladyship. And a couple of speechifying attempts to show the skull beneath the skin (though given all by Finney, rather too much by Courtenay — who sometimes seems to forget he is playing to a camera and not the back of the stalls) are at once confusing and embarrassing. This Sir has bad dreams, can't remember his lines, has trouble breathing, but one is left in darkness as to the nature of his ailment, even as to whether it isn't all in his mind and just part of a recurring pattern of pre-curtain-up behaviour and despair. Until, that is, his death, when a querulous Norman runs a caricatural gamut of feelings akin to those of the Fool. At which point, one thinks backwards over the piece, reflects on the skimmingly displayed but high anxiety of other members of Sir's troupe, and asks oneself why the hell the show always has to go on. Looked at coolly, in less shallow terms than the event inhabits, Norman emerges as a wilfully blind and ultimately self-serving little, brittle shit, for all his dubious devotion.

Robert Altman's **Streamers** is also drawn from a stage play, by David Rabe, who re-wrote it for the screen with — it may be gathered — some improvisational assists from the director. The result is at a far remove from *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*, which had that relieving and visually aerating mirror as well as inspired ensemble performances from those women. This one has received a festival accolade, to my amazement, for something similar, a Golden Lion at last year's Venice for best acting to the entire principal cast. Claustrophobically set in an Army barracks in 1965, where some half-dozen soldiers — a pair of white privates, a pair of black ones, a couple of drunken old-sweat sergeants — are tensely waiting assignment to Vietnam, it turns out to be a sort of parodic and unnourishing all-American muesli, variously mixing in anxieties about homosexuality (large spoonful), Uncle-Tomism, cowardice, over-and under-education and sheer anxiety itself. One of the blacks is a knife-happy nutter, one of the white boys a crooked-grinned homosexual and general stirrer-up. What I could hear of it left me very cold, what I saw deeply incredulous. One thought they didn't write 'problem' melodrams like this any more.

Ted Kotcheff's **Uncommon Valour** features post-Vietnam, with Colonel Gene Hackman improbably assembling and training a group of his missing son's ex-Marine buddies to rescue said son from a Laos POW camp. Of its action-packed, largely mindless kind, competent. Hawaii plays Laos. □

## TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

# Orient excess

UNTIL RECENTLY there were only three documentary series about oriental countries running concurrently on television: *The Heart of the Dragon* (China), *Wheels of Fire* (India) and *Sukiyaki and Chips* (Japan). At last we have a fourth — **The Two Faces of Thailand** (C4), although this still leaves a great many oriental countries out in the cold.

The two faces of the rather ga-ga title of this new series are those of East and West, if you can imagine them. They are represented in last week's instalment by two musics: jazz, as played by and for the King on ceremonial occasions (His Majesty's Blues) and the popular music of the Likay theatre bands, who put on romps like *The Boxer Gets His Girl*. As the film went on, however, it seemed there was a third kind of music lurking in Thailand, in defiance of the series' title. This was called Luk Tung, a unique mixture of rural Thai harmonies and Western Pop, potentially more interesting than both, though totally ignored by city dwellers. One famous Luk Tung star was shot by a rival singer. His son has made a career out of this, putting on immense musical fantasies about the crime. 'Our opponents use guns and bombs,' he said. 'The only thing to do is pray.' Thai boxers pray too, before and after a fight, like bullfighters. They train in special schools from the age of ten, watch television in the evenings with advertisements for 'Panto' pep-pills and dash out to the massage parlour at the weekend.

Thai boxing also has two faces: feet from the east and fists from the west, although traditional instruments accompany the fight, as in Spain, speeding up their rhythms as the fight progresses. If a boxer wins, he will pay for dancers to perform for the priests in the temple, as thanks to the Buddha. These girls also make a living as go-go dancers and masseurs and the priests make a living blowing the spirits of their clients' ancestors into them through holes in gilt crowns. The film made it clear that there were all kinds of things like this going on in the East that it couldn't account for, except to say that they were usually tempered by a certain amount of Westernisation, but never too much, except occasionally.

If you were gazing idly at a piece of greenery last Friday and you caught sight of a man climbing a tree and shooting a catapult into a river, you may have turned the volume up to find out what was going on. So it was that I first heard about carp fishing on a useful magazine slot called **South of Watford** (ITV). I thought carp were those sloppy oriental mutations that eat out of your hand, but it seems these are more appealing. 'If I thought the hook hurt the fish, I'd give it up today,' said a fisherman. 'If I saw one on a fishmonger's slab it would sicken me. How could anyone kill such a beautiful creature?'

At one point I wondered who was fishing whom: 'I saw this fellow fishing this beautiful big thing out of the river and from that moment I was hooked.' The trouble is that very often the carp refuses to throw them back. One man sold his house to live off the proceeds and go fishing: 'there's more divorces because of carp...you just sit there and enjoy it. You can't describe it.' I began to understand that the idea is to meet the fish, not eat it: have a look at it, weigh it, photograph it, give it a name and generally suck up to it a bit rather than murder it with hooks and air. A young man came out with it: 'To catch a 30lb carp, it's like the first time you make love.' Yes, but supposing you only catch a 7lb one?

There was a toss-up in the embarrassment stakes last week between Horizon's **Prisoners of Incest** (BBC 2), in which the embarrassment of embarrassed acting was set against the embarrassment of other people's suffering being used as a rather slow-moving entertainment, and **An Audience with Joan Rivers** (C4). There were mixed reactions among the self-conscious celebrities present — some two-faced, others three. You tended to think that the people who laughed openly had something to hide. This was an exercise in embarrassment and you either swallowed the bait, or you held off and admired the concept. Rivers could take a contemptuous look at Mrs Emmanuelle's engagement ring and say, 'You must be lousy in bed,' because she was also saying, 'I'll achieve multiple orgasm the day



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Stevie Wonder hits a hole in one'. Ripping yourself to shreds in public — 'I had my nose fixed. They made it look like the old one so no one would notice' — forestalls such thoughts in others while opening up whole new tracts of safely personalised misogyny.

I enjoyed her put-downs of nurses — 'They always make you an apple-pie bed' — more than those of Joan Collins and Elizabeth Taylor, who are dead areas by now. 'You gonna have natural childbirth honey?' she asked an expectant actress.

> O God, why? Go ahead and scream. I went 'Ahhhhrrrrgggrrr!' and that was only during the conception. Marie Osmond told me that joke. Her legs have been together longer than the Shadows. No, actually I had the Jewish Childbirth. Knock you out at the first contraction, wake you up in the hairdresser's afterwards. Some people have it on video. They have the neighbours round and they're saying, 'Come on, run it backwards. Let's see the child disappearing again.'

In the same way you have to be affable in a business letter in order not to appear rude, some comedians feel they have to go over the top in order to excavate a laugh from that stony rock-face out there, Joan for one. There is nothing new about her four-letter Jewish humour, except the speed with which she covers up the cracks. At least she isn't 'family', that curse of Eighties moral-majority commercial-mindedness imported on our behalf by Mrs Whitehouse. □

**THEATRE**
Rosalind Carne

# Space probe

**One for the Road** and **Victoria Station**
HAROLD PINTER *Lyric Studio*
**Marriage**
GOGOL *Lyric, Hammersmith*
**Loot**
JOE ORTON *Ambassadors*

One image lingers indelibly — Alan Bates, sleek, calm and vicious, drinking whisky, treading the thick carpet, circling his wounded victim with the casual sadism of absolute power. Pinter has moved defiantly into the political arena, accompanied by anxious murmurings from his devotees that, by taking on the mantle of Amnesty International, he may lose the touch of genius with which he illumines the despair and the power games of less obviously charged situations.

But the old concerns remain: the tense psychological confrontation in a single room which comes to signify more than mere geographical location, the importance of tiny gestures and apparently offhand remarks. In some ways, this new piece is an ironic comment on the writer's method, as the interrogator picks holes in his captives' clear statements, simply to wear down their resistance. However, there is, unusually for Pinter, no space for ambiguity about the moral slant of the play.

Victor (Roger Lloyd Pack) hobbles in on bare bloodied feet, clutching his torn trousers and holding up his head in an effort of agony. He is almost silent as Nicholas (Bates), representative of an unnamed dictatorship, mingles pointed accusations with the silken urbanities of cocktail-party chatter, taunting him with trivia, torturing him with references to his wife, imprisoned elsewhere in the same building. Victor's seven-year-old son and wife (Jenny Quayle) are separately questioned with a structural clarity that mirrors the play's documentary feel. Leaving the theatre I found myself thinking, as so often with Pinter, 'Yes. . . but why?', only to realise later that, in this case, 'Why?' was exactly what the play, so terrifyingly, asks.

**Victoria Station** is a revival, first seen at the Cottesloe, where I found it slight and gimmicky. In the more intimate setting of the Lyric Studio, directed by the author and with Bates once again in the lead, it acquires additional force. It certainly requires an actor of his depth and capacity for detail to convey, from behind the windscreen of a mini-cab, the sense of a character possessed with all the symptoms of amnesia. The almost static scenario consists entirely of bizarre radio communication between the cabbie and his controller.

Hammersmith workers may find their humdrum afternoons taking on an unfamiliar,


billboard

## Opera & Ballet

**SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE**, EC1. 01-278 8916 (5 lines). CC group sales 01-930 6123. Until 31 March, eves 7.30 **Ballet Rambert** 23, 24, 26 March Chicago Brass/ Intimate Pages/ Colour Moves. From 27 March Voices and Light Footsteps/ Concertino/ Colour Moves.

**BLOOMSBURY THEATRE** Gordon Street WC1. S & CC 01-387 9629. 23, 24 March, 7.30pm. London Music Theatre Group 'Juditha Triumphans' by Vivaldi. 28, 30, 31 March 7.30pm Park Lane Opera 'Doctor Miracle' Lecocq/ 'Margot La Rouge' Delius.

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surreal quality after lunch-time exposure to this exceptionally potent double bill. In fact, the impact is likely to be considerably greater than that produced by the more ambitious production in the main house. There's no denying the skills of Shared Experience, directed by Mike Alfreds who has himself produced the English version of Gogol's **Marriage.** This sings along with some gloriously apt colloquialisms, but would have benefited from a few hefty cuts.

Four moth-eaten suitors present themselves, via the matchmaker, to a buxom virgin, a merchant's daughter in dire need of a husband at the ripe old age of 28. The scene is set with the leisurely concern for detail we associate with 19th-century Russia, but which is hard to stomach in the speedy 20th. Still, my reservations about the wisdom of resurrecting this little-known comedy were gradually forced aside by the vigour and definition of the performances, particularly in the second half when the rapacious gentlemen expose their baser motives.

John Price plays Baltazar Baltazarovich, a retired naval lieutenant, an antiquated maritime bore with an appropriate sea-dog reference for every eventuality. Nick Dunning is only marginally less repulsive as Nikanor Ivanovich, the retired infantry officer, obsessed with social niceties. Sam Dale is the neatly tailored, peculiarly cube-shaped college assessor, while James Smith is most appealing as the painfully shy, ultimately successful civil servant. I should also mention Philip Voss as the energetic go-between and Maggie Wells in a fine blend of caricature and charm touched with pathos as the hopeful bride-to-be.

Paul Dart's design clutters the stage with cumbersome, dark wooden furniture, an appropriate comment on the central theme of property and possession, but theatrically somewhat overwhelming. Moreover, despite the undoubted beauties of this theatre, it is not an easy space in which to play. Likewise the Ambassadors, where I couldn't help feeling that Orton's **Loot** would have been better served in a more austere setting than that provided by Saul Radomsky's frilly pink design. It may be intended as a visual dig at the suburban taste and naturalistic theatre of the mid-Sixties, but it felt dated, just as the play itself has begun to creak surprisingly in under 20 years.

Directed by Jonathan Lynn with care but a little too much breathless speed in the first half, the production's strong points are Leonard Rossiter's marble-eyed Truscott and Gemma Craven's deliciously psychopathic Nurse Fay. Both treat the text with the right note of detachment, but there's no escaping the fact that for all its brilliance of invention and structure, *Loot*'s element of shock has receded. □

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# FIRST PERSON

Jeremy Lewis

## Learning to love the chip

ONE OF THE MANY ways in which — repeatedly — I fail to be my age is to be found in the extreme irritation that overcomes me when machines refuse to do what is expected of them. A crackling transistor radio or an electric razor that isn't pulling its weight transform me in a flash from a mild and inoffensive clerk into an apoplectic colonel — eyes bulging, molars grinding, hair electric with indignation, hands rending the air, the right foot lashing out like a skinhead in suede. At prep school I dashed my new Parker 51 into the desk, overcome with rage at some malfunctioning of the nib; at university I hurled my typewriter across the room when the letter 'e' refused to return to its rightful place; as a family man of the type featured in building society brochures, I can still be spotted delivering upper cuts to tape recorders or exacting a terrible and costly revenge on recalcitrant windscreen wipers.

Like most of us, I suspect, I both love and loathe the machines on which I so hopelessly depend. I combine the townee's regret for the passing of ancient crafts with a grateful delight in heating that comes on at the push of a button, and stoves that needn't be fed with lumps of coal; I mutter crossly about shoddy workmanship and the disposable society while wielding my throw-away plastic razor; I fulminate against the motor car as we trundle towards the coast, my wife at the wheel beside me; I am happy to read about boisterous washerwomen, but the arrival of one on my doorstep would fill me with confusion and confirm me in my belief that the invention of the washing machine is one of the finest achievements of this unhappy century, and its originator an unsung hero of our times.

When it comes to the tools of my trade, my zeal for machinery grows by leaps and bounds. I cannot imagine not being able to type, and have often — and quite wrongly — thought that those who cannot bang away with two fingers should be disqualified for ever from the joys of office life; my delight in working out percentages and totting up my expenses on a pocket calculator almost reconciles me to the tragic loss of pounds, shillings and pence, and the pleasing perplexity they induced in the foreigner; as a publisher, I look up occasionally from the mound of dog-eared typescripts with which I am surrounded and, elbow propped upon my enormous pre-war typewriter, muse excitedly on the day when even the most impecunious and unmechanical authors will deliver their masterpieces on tape or disc, which I will then edit on a glowing VDU screen before having them run off on the office word-processor . . .

It's at this point — when the ubiquitous computer steps on stage — that the Luddite and the sceptic in me re-assert themselves. Computers are, as we all know (or ought to know) as fallible and as cunning as those who programme them, and as a tool they are — like hoovers or electric mixers — entirely admirable in that they enable us to perform useful and often extremely tedious tasks far more quickly and efficiently than in days of yore. Yet the existence of those ingenious machines seems to provoke among their more eloquent admirers an almost religious fervour, a Manichean sense that those who worship will be for ever blessed, while non-subscribers will be cast into a pit of darkness and permanent poverty. Over-excited academics write urgent, indigestible books about Fifth Generation computers whose bulging brains contain all human knowledge on a chip the size of a grain of sand, and rumble menacingly about information as the oil of the future and the currency-to-come.

Those who struggle to the end of such works usually find — with a sense of profound anti-climax — that, for all their invaluable powers of calculation and permutation, even the best of these machines turns out to have an extremely stunted intellect; and, useful as it is to be able to summon up mountains of information at the press of a button and flash it around the world at the speed of light, information is (one would have thought) merely a means to an end, and how all this whizzing to and fro is supposed to feed the hungry millions or benefit the person in the street remains obscure.

And yet people in the street are being insidiously persuaded that unless they invest in a family computer they will be losing out and — still worse — depriving their children of a stake in the future; with the result that thousands of over-anxious Mums and Dads are hurrying out to spend money they can ill afford on machines that, more often than not, cannot be of any practical use to them whatever (and are, if the truth be told, hardly sparkling company at the best of times). Computers are invaluable in business and professional life, but what possible use can the average family have for a word-processor? What *is* all this information I should spend my time storing and retrieving? Am I right in assuming that once the children have lost interest in playing extremely boring computer games, most of these machines will gather dust in attics, along with Rubick cubes and models of E.T.? If I promise not to punch you, will some kind computer offer me an answer? □

# WEEKEND COMPETITION

**No 2814 Set by Gerard Benson**

Let's see what you can do with the latest poetic form: the single-line anagrammatic poem. For the perplexed, here are a couple of examples. '"Naomi is my darling," I moan disarmingly'; 'Enter a pet; penetrate!' As many goes each as you like, by 6 April.

**No 2811 Set by E. O. Parrott**

Extracts from famous love stories revised for Mills & Boon.



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## Report — By Di Dact

One is sometimes compelled to wonder whether some of you cannot read. The first two Rs are generally thought to be concomitant skills, but not, it appears, in your case. We did not ask for *blurbs*; we asked for extracts. The two are distinct literary forms — will you please not confuse them again? In passing, it should also be said that trying to re-write *Wuthering Heights* as though for Mills & Boon is an exercise in tautology. Three of you tried, but only succeeded in replicating the middle Miss Brontë to a T. But well done Petty, Bellenger, Eden, Rudge, Fagg and Warburton. One merit mark, three cheers and five pounds each.

As she hurried across the *piazza*, Beatrice felt her pulses racing. Her wiser self told her not to be silly. After all, the last three days were probably coincidence. Still . . . She emerged from the shadow of the *palazzo* into the sunlight.

He was there again.

It was as though he had never moved. He stood by the bridge in the identical posture, one hand raised to his breast (or his heart?).

She affected not to notice him, but could not resist a sidelong glance as she passed. Their eyes met. His face, though young, was deep with experience. A face that knew something of Heaven, and perhaps of Hell.

She was past him now, her mind in turmoil. Obeying a sudden impulse, she whirled to face him.

'Are you following me?' she said.

NOEL PETTY

He was strong, dominant, powerful, and as she gazed up into his large luminous eyes, eyes remorseful and yet somehow savage, she felt herself melting. He had her in the palm of his hand, or so it seemed; and he could consume her whole at a whim, at a flick of his caressing finger.

Suddenly tears welled up in his eyes, and she saw, deep in their depths, how it would inevitably be. His colossal frame, his tremendous inner strength, his almost primitive passion — each of them overwhelmed her. It was as if he had come to her from a dim and distant past, to cast some superhuman shadow over her. She called out, 'They will say... that we were not right for one another! Oh, Kong, they will say . . ."

And she felt him ball his fist.

WILL BELLENGER

His handsome features darkened with resolve. 'One day this horrid business will be over. We shall build a new tomorrow for ourselves and for our country!'

He felt her hands tremble like imprisoned birds against his manly chest. How sweet she was! How unswerving in her loyalty! How plucky she had been throughout the years!

'I *shall* tell Margaret — but the moment must be right. Be patient, Sara — we have endless time...' With a low moan he buried his face in the reassuring softness of her auburn hair.

'Not *endless* Cecil.' The sunset lent an unfamiliar ripeness to her contours. She blushed with passion, pride and expectation. 'You see, my steadfast darling, e'en now there grows a tiny floating voter...'

DIANA EDEN

Charlotte's slender fingers flitted deftly among the taut threads of her loom while her grey eyes, wide set beneath a creamy brow, glanced frequently from her work to the mirror, throwing back to her the scene below.

A sigh escaped her slightly parted lips. The only people passing were those inevitable villagers — likeable enough but far from exciting. Oh, come on someone truly exciting!

Almost as the thought came to her she saw reflected a figure — tall, wiry, muscular brown arms in a short sleeved blue shirt — casually guiding a sturdy hunter along the canal bank to the village. Charlotte darted to the window, catching her breath.

As she looked down, the mirror behind toppled with a splintering crash. 'Seven years hard luck,' breathed Charlotte. 'But who cares?'

KEN RUDGE

It had all seemed to come so easily. Mark King-Roy: the man who had won every prize that life seemed to offer. Only in the brave tired brilliance of his smile could one read the real cost. But nothing had ever cost as much as staying calm now, in this moment of stumbling in on the betrayal that hits a man where it hurts most.

The man he had thought his friend stood speechless and ashen. She, however, pleaded: 'But Mark, we hadn't — I mean, we didn't — we just wouldn't, darling — and, anyway, when it came to it, Tris *couldn't* — just one of those things, poor lamb. Oh damn this fringe medicine,' she cried suddenly, hurling a small glass phial at a particularly priceless piece of Tang, on which it shivered into a thousand fragments. 'It seems to make a girl behave all anyhow!'

MARTIN FAGG

Candle-light was playing softly against the peach complexion of Emma's cheek when she heard the door and looked up to see him silhouetted against the violent red of the evening sky.

'Come to me, Emma,' he breathed. 'When a man's been at sea for as long as I have, he finds he can scarce say what's in his heart. Oh, Em!'

'Oh, Ho,' she sighed, running to him in a flutter. 'Take me in your arms!'

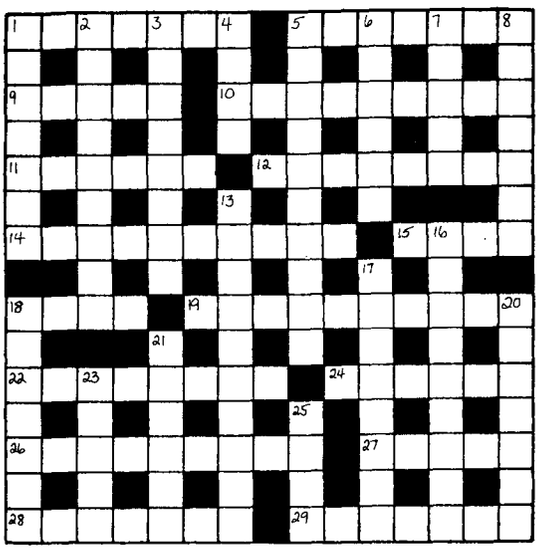
He stiffened his craggy, weather-beaten jaw. 'My arm, Em,' he corrected gently. 'I'm not the man I was when last we met.'

'Then take me in your arm,' she sobbed. 'It matters not to me, as long as I can gaze into your eyes.'

N. J. WARBURTON

# Weekend Crossword 1434

**PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1434, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 3 April.**



Name_____

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ACROSS

1. Sack one who takes money (7)
5. One of those who murder Schubert (7)
9. Island to put inside everything (5)
10. They lived together but married in a chaotic state after the man returned (9)
11. Physical labour which makes a man gain gravity (6)
12. Does gain erratically when under stress (8)
14. Wood sees the directors after the game (10)
15. I try for a lot at the same place (4)
18. Part of London which is not quite as warm (4)
19. Beneath the arrow there is an arms manufacturer (10)
22. The person behind the bush is a bowler (8)
24. Sinful but equipped to spread the light? (6)
26. Means of making sharp but fair single (9)
27. Knowing it would be pointless if there were fighting (5)
28. The fault lies with me in returning exhausted (7)
29. Almost see inside device with torch (7)

DOWN

1. Where to applaud a bad actor (7)
2. What provides the time to stand and stare? (9)
3. Opera produced in a hotel (8)
4. It floats whether you put a hundred on it or not (4)
5. Disorderly place has to be arranged differently (10)
6. Getting rid of barbarism thanks to a period of civilization (6)
7. Feelings from which a test player has to escape (5)
8. Lived although part of body seemed to be in danger (7)
13. If you have drinks before a fight it makes you slow down (10)
16. Judges used to have them and they have beaks (9)
17. Work out that there are one thousand in a group of houses (8)
18. Girl is held by strange lads and cut up (7)
20. The fish I found in a river is best ordered (7)
21. One and a half times a remover (6)
23. Material dug up? (5)
25. Command in those actual battles (4)

SETSQUARE

**Solution to 1432**

**Prizewinners to 1432**

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# LISTINGS

## FRI 23 MARCH

**HAMMERSMITH** El Salvador Film Benefit to mark Elections and 4th Anniversary of Archbishop Romero's murder. 7pm St Paul's Church, Broadway. Spkrs. Salvador Moncada (FDR) Spkr. from Inter Church Task Force on Salvador. Adm, £2/£1 unwaged.

**LONDON** 'Women in Arms' — documentary film on role of women in Nicaraguan revolution, 'Carry Greenham Home' documentary on Women's Peace Camp, 7.45pm Deptford & Lewisham Progressive Film Soc, Limes Hall, Limes Grove, SE13. Membs. 75p/50p unwaged, non-membs. £1.50/£1. **01-691 4896.**

**LONDON** 'Mugging — the crime statistics' 7.30 pm Uni. of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Spkrs from NCCL/Radical Statistics Grp. Adm. free.

**LONDON** 'Media Censorship on Ireland: The Attack on Gerry Adams.'. Public meeting with video showing, 7.30pm Room 125, Lambeth Town Hall, Acre Lane, Brixton, SW2. Admission 30p. **South London Irish Solidarity Committee, BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX.**

## SAT 24 MARCH

**PORTSMOUTH** 'Peace Movement in Eastern Europe' day conf. Spkrs incl E.P. Thompson, spkrs from Hungary, Poland, USSR. £4/£1 unwaged. Eve: 'The Future for CND' public speech by E.P. Thompson. 8pm Pask Bld, Guildhall. Adm. free. **Details: G. Austin, c/o Students Union, END, Museum Rd. 0705 669159.**

**LONDON** Vigil and sponsored Fast for El Salvador 9am-9pm St. Martins in the Field, Trafalgar Sq. **Org ELSSOC 01-359 3976.**

**LONDON** 'Palestine — the need for solidarity' conf. for trade unionists. 10am-4pm Friends House, Euston Rd. **Phone for credentials 01-373 5227 Labour Middle East Council/Trade Union Friends of Palestine/PLO.**

**HARINGEY** GLC Campaign Day 10am Tottenham Green Education Centre, Town Hall Approach Rd, N15. **Details: 01-881 3187/808 4754.**

**LONDON** Liberals and Radicals Conf. Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Ave, SW1. Spkrs incl David Owen MP, Michael Meadowcroft MP, Des Wilson. **Details: 01-703 7911 eves.**

## SUN 25 MARCH

**LONDON** 'How could we help peace break out in Middle East?' Spkr Prof. Richard Hauser. 8pm 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6. **Org MAPAM 01-328 2554.**

## MON 26 MARCH

**WANDSWORTH** Cycling Campaign Public Meeting 7.30pm Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Gill Clo, SW18.

**LONDON** 'End British Collaboration with Apartheid' public meeting with film 'You have struck a rock'. 7.30pm Camden Centre Bidborough St, WCL. Adm. 50p/20p unwaged. **Org Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! P&P BCM Box 5909 London, WC1N 3XX.**

**DEPTFORD** Labour Party Event at Albany Empire, Douglas Way, SE8. 8pm. Adm. £3/£2 unwaged. **Details: Patrick Brown, Deptford Labour Party 01-691 3333.**

## TUES 27 MARCH

**LONDON** 'Robert Birley and the concept of Liberal Education' Spkr Lord Grimond 6pm Oliver Thompson Lecture Theatre, City University, Northampton Sq, EC1. Adm. free.

**WIMBLEDON** 'Is there an arms race?' Spkr Prof. Lawrence Freedman. 8pm Drake Hs, St George's Rd, SW19. Adm free. **Org Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition, 55 *Lambton Rd, Raynes Park, SW20.***

## WED 28 MARCH

**LONDON** Practical Opportunities for Ecology in North London. day conf. 9.30am-4.30pm. **Details: Urban Spaces Scheme, Dept. of Food and Biological Sciences, Poly. of North London, Holloway, London, N7. 01-607 2789 x 2118.**

**LONDON** 'Development — Friedman or Keynes' Frank McElhone Memorial Lecture by Judith Hart 7.30pm Caxton Hall, Westminster. Adm. Free. **Org. Labour Aid & Development Ctte. Peter Ross 01-408 1840 x 3221 day.**

**LONDON** 'From deterrence to first strike' Spkr. Mary Kaldor 7.30pm 'Pentameters', above Three Horseshoes Pub, Heath St, NW3. Adm. free. **Org. Hampstead CND.**

**LONDON** 'William Morris — a Socialist for *Our Times' Spkr John Kay. 8.15pm Clapham* Library, Clapham Common, Old Town.

## THURS 29 MARCH

**LONDON DEMOCRACY DAY NATIONAL RALLY** Jubilee Gardens. Spkrs. at 3pm when marches arrive incl. Neil Kinnock, David Basnett, John Cunningham, Rodney Bickerstaffe.

**LONDON** City of London Anti-Apartheid Grp. picket Barclays Bank Head Office, Lombard St, EC1. 1-2pm. **Details: 01-837 6050.**

**DUDLEY** Racism in Britain. Public Discn. with Dave Cook, Nat. Sec. Campaign against Racist Laws. 7.30pm The Swan, Castle St. **Org Communist Party.**

## FRI 30 MARCH

**SHEFFIELD** 'Communicating Democracy — who controls the Image?' 2-day school **Org. Sheffield Independent Film/Sheffield Latin American Solidarity Front. 0742 336429.**

**COLCHESTER** 'Due Process: English Law & the Convention on Human Rights' conf. 11.30am-9pm. Wivenhoe House, University of Essex. **Details: Centre for International Human Rights Law, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ.**

**LONDON** 'Bernard Shaw and the Webbs — A Fabian Friendship' Spkr Dr. L. A. Radice 6.30pm Conway Hall, WC1. **Org The Shaw Society.**

**GLASGOW** 'Paint the Town Red' Festival until Sunday. Details/tickets Mitchell Theatre (Moir Hall) Graville St. **Org Scottish Socialist Soc.**

## SAT 31 MARCH

**LONDON** International Solidarity Cultural Evening in support of Armenian Political Prisoners. 7.30pm St James's Hall, Lancaster Gate. Adm. £2. **Org. Ctte. for Defense of Armenian Political Prisoners, 133A High St, Acton, W3 6LY.**

**LONDON** 'Right to a Home' Conf. on Socialist Housing Policy. 10.30am-5pm Central London Poly, New Cavendish St, W1. Spkrs: Chris Holmes, John Fraser, Peter Kellner, Chris Smith. **Org Labour Housing *Grp, Geoff Randall, 4 Fawley Rd, NW6.***

**LONDON** Women's Action on Policing — 2 day conf. 10-6pm both days. Hampden Community Centre, Ossoulton St, NW1. Adm. £5 orgs./£2 & £5/50p unwaged. Women only, creche, wheelchair access. **Details: Women's Action on Policing, c/o A Woman's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, WC2.**

## FORTHCOMING

**3 APRIL WANDSWORTH** 'Depression — the value of self help' talk on work of Depressives Associated. Adm. free, refreshments, collection. 7.30pm Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Gill Clo. SW18. **Org WAMH, 3 Broderick Rd, SW17.**

***3 APRIL LONDON*** *'Day Care — where* next?' conf. org by National Childcare Campaign 9.45-1pm National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakely St, N1. To book creche and register (fee £2) **Ruth Fisk, Conf. Organiser, NCCC, 75 Kingsway, WC2.**

*Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.*



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For further details and an application form, please write to:

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**PUBLIC MEETING** 7.15 p.m. Wednesday 28 March Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. 'Racism, Anti-semitism and the New Right in Britain Today'. Speakers: Unmesh Desai, Francesca Klug. Organised by Jewish Cultural and Anti-racist Project.

**SHAW SOCIETY.** Dr L.A. Radice on 'Bernard Shaw and the Webbs – A Fabian Friendship'. Friday 30 March, Conway Hall, WC1. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m.

**THEOSOPHY**: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 25 March 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Man, Mortal & Immortal'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

## SOCIALIST SOCIETY AGM

**'Beyond Defeatism — Discussion of Socialist Strategies and the Role of the Socialist Society'.**

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**JEWISH GIRL** (n/o), youthful mid-30s, petite, attractive, bright, presentable, lively/quiet accordingly, varied interests. Seeks kind, humorous, unattached, romantic, successful *Jewish male with buoyant personality. London* area. Box 7910.

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